

Horizon

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

THE PROPAGANDA PROBLEM

by PETER CROMWELL

HAPPY ALL ALONE

by ROLAND LUSHINGTON

THE END OF A TRADITION

by G. W. STONIER

BYRON IN VENICE—II

by PETER QUENNELL

POEMS *by* ALUN LEWIS, LOUIS MACNEICE, DYLAN THOMAS,
ANDREW YOUNG, GEOFFREY MATTHEWS, NICHOLAS MOORE,
and ANNE RIDLER

REVIEWS *by* K. J. RAINE, JOHN POPE-HENNESSY,
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMMENT	5
ALL DAY IT HAS RAINED	<i>Alun Lewis</i> 9
PLURALITY	<i>Louis MacNeice</i> 10
DEATHS AND ENTRANCES	<i>Dylan Thomas</i> 12
THE FIELD-GLASS	<i>Andrew Young</i> 13
POEM	<i>Geoffrey Matthews</i> 14
POEM	<i>Nicholas Moore</i> 15
POEM	<i>Anne Ridler</i> 16
THE PROPAGANDA PROBLEM	<i>Peter Cromwell</i> 17
HAPPY ALL ALONE	<i>Roland Lushington</i> 33
THE END OF A TRADITION	<i>G. W. Stonier</i> 39
BYRON IN VENICE—II	<i>Peter Quennell</i> 47
SELECTED NOTICES	63
REPRODUCTIONS:	

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COMMENT

ABOUT this time of year articles appear called 'Where are our war poets?' The answer (not usually given) is 'under your nose'. For war poets are not a new kind of being, they are only peace poets who have assimilated the material of war. As the war lasts, the poetry which is written becomes war poetry, just as inevitably as the lungs of Londoners grow black with soot. It is unfortunate from the military point of view that war poetry is not necessarily patriotic. When the articles ask 'Where are the war poets?' they generally mention Rupert Brooke, because he wrote some stirring sonnets and was killed in action, though his poems were generally nostalgic or amorous. They want real war poets and a roll of honour. In this number we print Dylan Thomas's fine first war poem, and one by Alun Lewis, which seems to suggest army life as it really is, and bring out something of the sad monotony which is distilled from the routine movements of vast masses of men. That we lack patriotic poetry at the moment is a healthy sign, for if it were possible to offer any evidence that civilization has progressed in the last twenty years, it would be that which illustrated the decline of the aggressive instinct. I write this in a lull in the air war, a lull in which I have several times heard people allude to the future activity of the Germans in such words as 'they must be planning something pretty big, trust them', in tones which are without hate, though hardly without admiration. And such observations are but a pale reflection of the masochist enthusiasm for the rod which has swept Europe. We are too civilized to recognize our own danger, we can only hate those whom we love, usually our next of kin. The army does its best, and on many commons the war cries of the bayonet-charging recruits ring out like disturbed waterfowl. Luckily, increased mechanization largely does away with the need of hate. Modern weapons make less demand on the bloodlust. This absence of aggressiveness, a danger in the war, is the healthiest of all symptoms for the peace, and makes possible the hope that, once we have had sufficient victories to remove self-confidence from our enemy, the awareness of the whole idiotic

archaic process of war, with its boredom, its slaughter, its privations, and its general clumsy uselessness may sweep over the world and induce people to give it up.

There is another aspect of the war and culture which it is refreshing to notice. Although there is very little new being written, there is a vast amount of old that is being forgotten. Blake told us to drive our harrow over the bones of the dead, and such a silent revolution is happening. The vast topheavy accumulation of learning, criticism, scholarship, *expertize*, the Alexandrian library of nineteenth-century Liberal capitalism, is falling to decay. Human beings have a tendency to over-civilization, they cannot tear up old letters, they collect and catalogue up to the edge of insanity. A burning of the books becomes at times a necessity; it was necessary to think Milton, or Pope, or Tennyson or Proust, or James, bad writers, if writing was to go on. Before the war the stream of creative writing was choked with the leaves of exegesis, writers were bowed down with their intellectual possessions, with their names and dates, their sense of the past, their collection of unspoilt villages, their knowledge of cheese, beer, wine, sex, first editions, liturgy, detective stories, Marx, and so on. It was a Footler's Paradise, a world in which, like a long sea voyage, those came to the top who could best kill time. Culbertson, Torquemada, Wodehouse, Dorothy Sayers, Duke Ellington; the hobby dominated the art, the artists were artists in spite of themselves, or worked in second-rate and inartistic material. In the realm of criticism the sense of the past dominated, the aunts and uncles of the great were exhumed, the load of material bore down on its inheritors, making them carping and irritable, while the ignorant but talented were forced to suffer for their ignorance, or waste their talent in catching up. The fear of democracy is the fear of being judged for what we are, instead of for what we have. Now that so many of us have no possessions, no houses or books or cars or notes, we find it less terrible than it seemed. Let us also have no theories and no facts, let us forget our great names, who had so much more patience, talent and leisure than we had and declare a cultural moratorium. The sooner we accept the Dark Ages the sooner they will be over. In the streets round this office, where the exposed green of fourth floor bathrooms shines against the blue winter sky, an enormous Rolls Royce often passes. Each time one sees this mammoth of luxury,

one wonders to whom it belongs; some Fatcat of Bloomsbury? A ground landlord? A members of the Corps Diplomatique? But as it glides past it becomes transparent, and reveals on well-oiled bearings its only passenger, a neat wooden coffin. The limousine belongs to the last people who can afford it: the luxurious dead.

ANTI-COMMENT

DEAR SIR,

In fairness to myself and to your readers I must make a few remarks about a matter in your Comment last month. You quote part of an article of mine in *Now* as if it were an attack on *Horizon*. I must make it quite clear that I did not attack the magazine as a magazine, but simply pointed out what I believe to be the inadequacies in your attitude as a writer. What I said then still seems to me true, in spite of your attempts to refute it. In fact, some of the things you say only supply further proof. For instance, in spite of your belief to the contrary, it seems to me that a Trade Union leader who at one moment shouts 'I know that orders have been issued, preparatory to Hitler making a peace offer, to the Communists of this country to disturb meetings', and at the next says: '. . . if some people will not honour their agreements, or refuse to recognize their own leaders, the State will have to exert its own authority. But, if we are driven to imitate any part of the Nazi régime, in the name of greater efficiency, it is going to be difficult to cut it out afterwards', is certainly the representative of a decadent and dying social system. Nor do I look with any greater trust on your own statement that 'The only political movement to-day which possesses real dynamism . . . is that represented by the loosely-joined progressive forces of Priestley, Hulton, Crossman, Harrisson, Foot, Owen, . . . etc.', particularly when you point out that it is led by political journalists rather than politicians, and then point to Mussolini and Goebbels (both progressive once) as successful examples. If *Horizon* is with their movement, I think an attack on it would be justified. But I still wish to distinguish between your contributors and your doubtful political line. I agree that, since *Horizon* exists 'to provide good writing', that it should be supported. This makes its editorial inadequacy the more unfortunate. To remedy this I suggest

several things: first, that you, Mr. Connolly, should look carefully into Churchill's record and the events leading up to and following his premiership, before you load him with such praise. (Though I admit that his oratory has stemmed the doubts of some of those at the bottom as to what those at the top are doing); and secondly, that you should read the six points of the People's Convention, study the movement leading up to it, and see if it is not really that dynamic, popular political movement for which you are looking. The Communist Party supports it, I know. That may put you off. But look into your heart, Mr. Connolly, and look with detachment at the way it has grown. You will not then be able to deny that it is a popular movement from among those at the bottom, not perhaps 'a democratic élite of the efficient', as you would wish, but surely something better and stronger than that. You have admitted in your editorials that the writer finds himself at present at the bottom too—he gets no favours from Ministries. I ask you then to consider your position at the bottom, and to take your stand with the movement that represents your interests, that has also the wish 'to win peace as well as war', and no doubt the 'dynamism' too.

As for the personal attack: I may not be such a gifted writer as you, Mr. Connolly, but I'd like to point out that if you substitute merely 'He offers' for my admittedly clumsy phrase, you don't get my meaning at all.

I wish you a happier New Year, and I hope you don't vanish.

With best wishes,

NICHOLAS MOORE

Horizon announces in forthcoming numbers:—New poems by Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice; 'A Defence of the Expatriates', by Louis MacNeice; 'Christianity and The War', by Stephen Spender; 'The Chamberlain Era', by Robert Byron; 'Herbert Read', by Graham Greene; 'Introducing Costals', by Arthur Calder-Marshall; 'Poetry in 1940', by Stephen Spender, and a section of the Autobiography of Augustus John.

ALUN LEWIS

ALL DAY IT HAS RAINED . . .

All day it has rained, and we on the edge of the moors
Have sprawled in our bell-tents, moody and dull as boors,
Groundsheets and blankets spread on the muddy ground.
And from the first grey wakening we have found
No refuge from the skirmishing fine rain
And the wind that made the canvas heave and flap
And the taut wet guy ropes ravel out and snap.
All day the rain has glided, wave and mist and dream,
Drenching the gorse and heather, a gossamer stream
Too light to move the acorns that suddenly
Snatched from their cups by the wild southwesterly
Pattered against the tent and our upturned dreaming faces.
And we stretched out, unbuttoning our braces,
Smoking a woodbine, darning dirty socks,
Reading the Sunday papers—I saw a fox
And mentioned it in the note I scribbled home;
And we talked of girls and dropping bombs on Rome
And thought of the quiet dead and the loud celebrities
Exhorting us to slaughter and the herded refugees;
Yet thought softly, morosely of them, and as indifferently
As of ourselves and those whom we for years
Have loved and will again
To-morrow maybe love; but now it is the rain
Possesses us entirely, the twilight and the rain.

And I can remember nothing dearer or more to my heart
Than the children I watched in the woods on Saturday
Shaking down burning chestnuts for the school-yard's merry
play,
Or the shaggy patient dog who followed me
Through Sheet and Steep and up the wooded scree
To the Shoulder o' Mutton where Edward Thomas brooded
long
On death and beauty—till a bullet stopped his song.

LOUIS MACNEICE

PLURALITY

It is patent to the eye that cannot face the sun,
The smug philosophers lie who say the world is one:
World is other and other, world is here and there,
Parmenides would smother life for lack of air
Precluding birth and death; his crystal never breaks—
No movement and no breath, no progress nor mistakes,
Nothing begins or ends, no one loves or fights,
All your foes are friends and all your days are nights
And all the roads lead round and are not roads at all
And the soul is muscle-bound, the world a wooden ball.
The modern monist too castrates, negates our lives
And nothing that we do, make or become, survives,
His terror of confusion freezes the flowing stream
Into mere illusion, his craving for supreme
Completeness means he chokes each orifice with tight
Plaster as he evokes a dead ideal of white,
All-white Universal, refusing to allow
Division or dispersal—Eternity is now
And Now is therefore numb, a fact he does not see,
Postulating a dumb static identity
Of Essence and Existence which could not fuse without
Banishing to a distance belief along with doubt,
Action along with error, growth along with gaps;
If man is a mere mirror of God, the gods collapse.
No, the formula fails that fails to make it clear
That only change prevails, that the seasons make the year,
That a thing, a beast, a man, is what it is because
It is something that began and is not what it was,
Yet is itself throughout, fluttering and unfurled,
Not to be cancelled out, not to be merged in world,
Its entity a denial of all that is not it,
Its every move a trial through chaos and the Pit,
An absolute and so defiant of the One
Absolute, the row of noughts where time is done,

Where nothing goes or comes and Is is one with Ought
And all the possible sums alike resolve to nought.
World is not like that, world is full of blind
Gulfs across the flat, jags against the mind,
Swollen or diminished according to the dice,
Foaming, never finished, never the same twice.
You talk of Ultimate Value, Universal Form—
Visions, let me tell you, that ride upon the storm
And must be made and sought but cannot be maintained,
Lost as soon as caught, always to be regained,
Mainspring of our striving towards perfection, yet
Would not be worth achieving if the world were set
Fair, if error and choice did not exist, if dumb
World should find its voice for good, and God become
Incarnate once for all. No, perfection means
Something but must fall unless there intervenes
Between that meaning and the matter it should fill
Time's revolving hand that never can be still.
Which being so and life a ferment, you and I
Can only live by strife in that the living die,
And, if we use the word Eternal, stake a claim
Only to what a bird can find within the frame
Of momentary flight (the value will persist
But as event the night sweeps it away in mist).
Man is man because he might have been a beast
And is not what he was and feels himself increased,
Man is man inasmuch as he is not God, and yet
Hankers to see and touch the pantheon and forget
The means within the end and man is truly man
In that he would transcend and flout the human span:
A species become rich by seeing things as wrong
And patching them, to which I am proud that I belong.
Man is surely mad with discontent, he is hurled
By lovely hopes or bad dreams against the world,
Raising a frail scaffold in never-ending flux,
Stubbornly when baffled fumbling the stubborn crux,
And so he must continue, raiding the abyss
With aching bone and sinew, conscious of things amiss,
Conscious of guilt and vast inadequacy and the sick
Ego and the broken past and the clock that goes too quick,

Conscious of waste of labour, conscious of spite and hate,
 Of dissension with his neighbour, of beggars at the gate,
 But conscious also of love and the joy of things and the power
 Of going beyond and above the limits of the lagging hour,
 Conscious of sunlight, conscious of death's inveigling touch,
 Not completely conscious but partly—and that is much.

DYLAN THOMAS

DEATHS AND ENTRANCES

On almost the incendiary eve
 Of several near deaths,
 When one at the least of your best loved
 And always known must leave
 Lions and fires of his flying breath,
 Of your immortal friends
 Who'd raise the organs of the counted dust
 To shoot and sing your praise,
 One who called deepest down shall hold his peace
 That cannot sink or cease
 Endlessly to his wound
 In many married London's estranging grief.

On almost the incendiary eve
 When at your lips and keys,
 Locking, unlocking, the murdered strangers weave,
 One who is most unknown,
 Your polestar neighbour, sun of another street,
 Will dive up to his tears.
 He'll bathe his raining blood in the male sea
 Who strode for your own dead
 And wind his globe out of your water thread
 And load the throats of shells
 With every cry since light
 Flashed first across his thunderclapping eyes.

On almost the incendiary eve
Of deaths and entrances,
When near and strange wounded on London's waves
Have sought your single grave,
One enemy, of many, who knows well
Your heart is luminous
In the watched dark, quivering through locks and caves,
Will pull the thunderbolts
To shut the sun, plunge, mount your darkened keys
And sear just riders back,
Until that one loved least
Looms the last Samson of your zodiac.

ANDREW YOUNG

THE FIELD-GLASS

Green buds that spoke in hints
And frozen ground that set the flints
As fast as precious stones
Made spring and winter in the combe at once.

Now when I climb the hill,
Where smutted snow-drifts linger still
Helping the sun to shine,
And set field-glass's greater eyes to mine,

Waking from winter sloth
Trees stretch themselves with magic growth,
And as I watch them shake
I see, but cannot hear, the sound they make.

GEOFFREY MATTHEWS

POEM

For a Friend Joining the R.A.F.

Fly then; but remember on your roaring pinnacle,
Peter, the meek cities jilted by your wheels,
Never let their littleness deceive you or silence slip
Between your wrists and where the sirens wail,
Or your gentleness be ravished by the cynical
Histories, or soft cloud-beauties curl your lip.

Remember how many have stunned a private despair
Within the crusading circles, or been simply weak,
—Part of the crowd who peeped at the crucifixion,—
Bravely forgetful that behind the grunting flak
And the white faces of the guns their women are
Inconsolate still for the Pied Piper's children.

Follow your saint if you must, but at least remember
Those nights we spent drinking the death of wars,
And our wheels unwinding the stinging roads of Cumnor
When frost dripped off the trees and telegraph wires,
'Had I a falconer's voice'—a world in amber
With beer drawn from the wood and a map of Berkshire.

Do not as the pharisees kill through pride of thought
Who were bitter once at a gunshot in the woods,
Or smile, tired with dismay, and betray the poor
Because of a girl's quietness or her severing words,
Else we of this city cannot be wooed to hate
False coin, the brass stars winking in Cassiopeia.

Keep faith; stroll in one day and tear the blinds
To make our Herod's fires a star in the East,
As after a night of storm some restless gipsy,
Wakening under canvas wet as a dipper's nest,
Blinks haggardly, breaks open the flap and finds
Pure blue behind the tent-pole, a perfect sky.

London 1940

NICHOLAS MOORE

POEM

(For Priscilla)

You look like history. All the bright caravans
That ended in no more than a madman's whisper,
The cavalcade of honour that led to death,
Is history you have lived and suffered beneath.

You look like that girl in an historical town
Who over seas was seized in exchange for a crown,
Or the woman who stood burning on a tall pyre,
Watching the flames consume, as did her desire.

You look like fable. Hung on a willow tree
The leaves weep for you, and leaves of a bible
Bear your footprint on every page of the corn,
Poppy, red with the history you have borne.

Birth is not the end, nor the babe in a stable,
Happy among straw who was honoured. He found
History put him on a cross with nails
And vinegar. That is true still.

You look like history, or rather that historical face
That blazes through wars and scars with a look of peace,
That has suffered history, is history, and lives
Like a beacon flaring among historical griefs.

You look like fable, myth, and the fairy tale,
But you are real as the boy was in the stable.
What agony is to suffer will still be true,
Though the future open up like a flower in you.

ANNE RIDLER

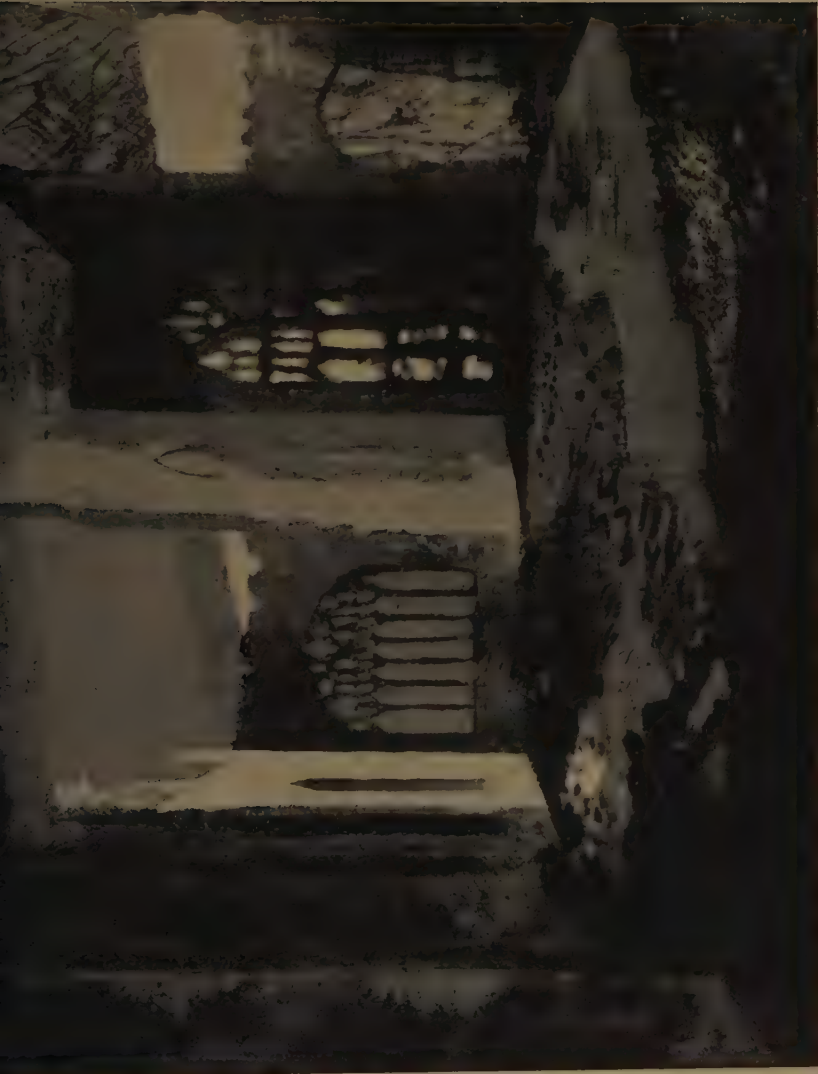
POEM

Sitting in our garden you cannot escape symbols,
Take them how you will.
Here on the lawn like an island where the air is still,
Circled by tides in the field and swirling trees,
It is of love I muse:
This designs the coloured fronds and heavy umbels,
Second-hand marriage, not for passion but business,
Brought on by the obliging bees.

This hedge is a cool perch for the brown turtle dove,
His phoenix unseen:
Such was their love that perhaps they grew to be one.
At first the mystical making one in marriage
Had all my heart and my homage:
A fire and a fusion were what I wanted of love.
But bodies are separate, and her fanatic bliss
Left the phoenix bodiless.

Frosty burning cloud, delectable gate
Of heaven hopelessly far,
Though tilting almost to touch, whose holy fire
Has no corrosive property unless
Despair of it destroys us;
When we love, toward you our faces are set.
Once I would win by the pains of passion alone,
Aim at you still, that method outgrown.

If the love I now have, takes from these earlier ones
The sweetness without the pain,
The burning nights, the breathless fears gone,
Peace in their place I never hoped to be given
Unless at last in Heaven,
It is your work, my darling, who have at once
The unscathing fire and the ease of peace:
All that I praise and bless.



Coventry Cathedral : November 13th, 1940. By John Piper
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PETER CROMWELL

THE PROPAGANDA PROBLEM

I

ANY objective analysis of Hitler's progress must admit that the main factor in his success has been the understanding by the leaders of his party of the principles of propaganda, of the principles of so influencing people's minds that they will do what is wanted of them without his having to resort to actual physical violence. This is as true in respect of his struggle to power inside Germany as in the international field, both before and during the war. It is an understanding that would seem to be instinctive in the case of Hitler himself; in that of Goebbels it is probably one of scientific application of psychological methods. It would not seem to matter, however, whether the understanding is instinctive or the result of logical planning, as far as effectiveness is concerned. What matters is that the understanding is so complete that it is shared by the Nazis with no other political party, only, in fact, with the more acquisitively intelligent of business leaders. It is this which has enabled these men, whose callous indifference to blood-spilling can allow them few rivals in history, to boast quite accurately that their methods of warfare are the most sparing of human lives and limbs. It is a fact that less blood has flowed per square mile conquered by Hitler than that conquered by anyone else since the invention of modern weapons. But while limbs are spared, minds are not; while wounds are avoided, neuroses are inflicted; while bodies are preserved, souls are destroyed. At the outset of the war, Hitler assured his people that the situation facing them was no more difficult than that which the Nazi Party overcame internally in Germany. What he meant was that he trusted in the same weapons which had brought him success in this first struggle: the weapons of the mind.

The history of the Nazis is so associated with physical violence that it is difficult to realize that the number of people who have actually suffered assault is infinitesimal compared with the number

who were voluntarily won over to the cause. (The case of the Jewish pogroms is different, as these were not intended to win over Jewish adherents to Nazidom, but to play a specific part in propaganda aimed at Aryans.) Around these incidents of violence, books have been written, films produced, and stories related. Not so much is told of those millions of individuals who were forced to fall in line by means of the shadow cast by these few violent episodes. It was the dramatization of the Nazis' physical power, in the form of propaganda designed to exploit the fear instinct, which was the real weapon. It was psychic assault, not physical assault, which brought Hitler victory at the polls.

That is not to say that the fear of violence was the only instinct appealed to in Nazi propaganda; others included the tribal instinct, the sex instinct (particularly to perversions of this instinct), the urge to dominate other people, and so on. But the fear appeal was that most used inside Germany, and that used almost entirely in relations with other countries.

It is this elaborate and energetic and altogether brilliant exploitation of the fear instinct which has made possible a revolution in Germany with only a few street fights and private lynchings to mar a transition otherwise of the highest legitimacy. It was this psychic violence, as opposed to physical violence, which was used against the French when Hitler walked into the Rhineland, that accomplished the almost unanimous voting of the Saar plebiscite. It was this use of propaganda which, at the right moment, won Austria, and later Munich. Czechoslovakia and Denmark followed without a struggle; Poland, Norway, the Low Countries and France fought, but either half-heartedly or else helplessly, dragged down by internal sores caused by the same instrument.

If we intend to win this war, it is vital that we understand the use of this weapon, not only for the purpose of counteracting it defensively, but for using it as a major factor in attack when the enemy will have 'cause to wonder when and where we shall strike him next'. The interesting thing is that the use of propaganda as a 'fourth arm' by the Germans has frequently been discussed in this country during the past four years, as has also the crying need for us to make use of it. Nevertheless, what propaganda efforts are being made by the government, whether at home or abroad, are so hopelessly amateurish that they have succeeded

in achieving only one effect, that, fortunately, not quite useless, to convince people that British propaganda is so poorly organized that their case must be better than it appears. There is, in fact, not only no plan and no policy, but appalling technique. Worst of all, there is very little realization officially that a good job is not being done.

What, then, can be the reason for this amazing lack of understanding on our part of something the enemy understands so well? It would seem to be due to a lack of appreciation that the principles of political and commercial propaganda are one and the same. Doctor Goebbels realized this at an early stage, and boasted nearly ten years ago that he would use American advertising methods in his election campaigns. And as soon as he had the power, Goebbels conscripted most of the leading commercial advertising men in Germany for his propaganda ministry. But in this country people cannot see that what sells National Socialism, the British Empire and American democracy, is also what sells chocolate, toothpaste, and patent medicines. They cannot see it because they do not appreciate that in selling a toothpaste the problem is 'to sell an idea', just as much as in the case of selling a country the benefits of a particular political philosophy. The problem is one of inducing a state of mind irrespective of what we are trying to sell. And the principles of inducing a state of mind are obviously the same whatever state of mind it is wished to induce.

It has already been shown how the Nazis exploited the fear instinct politically in their propaganda. This instinct is also that used most often by commercial advertisers. The consuming public do not fear being beaten up by S.A. men when they read advertisements, as they did when they saw the swastika. But they are in fear of other things happening just as bad. Manufacturers use mental terror just as Goebbels did. Is it not terrorization to convince someone that his teeth will fall out unless he uses a certain toothpaste; that he will lose his job unless he changes the brand of his soap; that her marriage will break up if she fails to use a particular self-raising flour; that sexually she will be just an 'also-ran' unless she understands, *really understands*, why undies have to be washed every day with a certain type of soap-flakes? To convince people of these things, as consumer surveys have proved people have been convinced, is to be as ruthless a merchant in neuroses as

any Goebbels, and to have as profound an effect on human behaviour. It may not be so sensationally apparent as a bloodless revolution or the fall of France, but that is because its objective is more limited, not because the principles of operation are different. In its field, its effect is as far-reaching as anything Hitler has ever done. It has succeeded in making a large number of people cease having faith in one person's health salt and have great faith in another's. It is exactly the same process which results in making people change their political philosophies.

The actual propaganda devices of the Nazi Party were the swastika, the salute, the slogan, and, in the background, the party programme. The parallels in commercial advertising are obvious. The swastika and salute are merely the trade mark or brand name; the slogan is the slogan; and the party programme is the 'reason-why' copy of the advertisement. Tremendous activity was put into spreading the sign of the swastika everywhere, on walls, roads, wherever it could be chalked up. The mere disfigurement of this symbol by the Social Democrats turning it into the sign of the Three Arrows was more than sufficient to counteract its original effect. The slogan was shouted and the salute given by party members in the streets. Processions were organized and tableaux symbolizing party aims were drawn through the streets. The meetings, at which the party programme was explained, were attended only by about ten per cent of the electorate, and by about twenty per cent of those who finally voted for the party. The other voters were reached only by the swastika, the salute, the slogans and the other symbols.

Surveys in commercial advertising have shown that a similar ratio exists between the people who see the nameplate and slogan of a press advertisement and those who read the copy. The point is that the majority of the people in either case only learn of the party or the commercial product (aside from word of mouth discussion) by means of symbols and slogans. The combination of these two brief but tremendously reiterated impressions is what does the trick. (After all, if this were not so, how would poster advertising work?) Of course, the political effect is much more intense because of the enthusiasm of individual people which does not operate in the case of commercial advertising except in a minor capacity. In the political campaign, people work as an alternative medium to paid space in the press, which is that most

favoured by commercial advertisers. What is important is that the process is the same although the media may be somewhat different.

In this country, until now, political propaganda has never been a really urgent need. But the making of money out of the large scale distribution of goods has been. The result is that the process of changing people's social ideas has never been studied seriously, whereas the process of changing people's buying habits has received an almost incredible amount of time and finance. The people in charge of political propaganda have therefore much to learn from the business men, although they may find this difficult to admit. The principles of planning a modern commercial propaganda campaign will now be described. It will become evident that this is also the way political propaganda should be planned.

II

A successful propaganda campaign has two main stages in its construction: (1) a scientific analysis of the state of mind of the people whom it is wished to influence; (2) the designing of propaganda material to exploit the situation so revealed. The first stage is, as a matter of fact, often ignored by commercial advertisers who are not in the forefront of their profession.

This is because the technique of finding out what people think about things is only recently developed and is still in the pioneer stage. It has been developed most successfully in the United States; first, by advertising men who were able to pour money economically into research of this kind because that country offered the largest market for consumer goods in the world; second, by journalists who were also able to finance such activities because of the immense market which exists for newspapers and periodicals to which the results of such surveys can be sold. Most people are now familiar with the Gallup Survey, the official title of which is the American Institute of Public Opinion. This organization was started by Dr. Gallup, whose first experiments in this field were for the benefit of commercial advertisers. Gallup was well known to the advertising profession long before journalists or the general public ever heard of him. This organization now has a subsidiary in this country called the British Institute of Public Opinion, and the results of its investigations are published in the *News-Chronicle*. The American magazine

Fortune employs an independent research organization, Elmo Roper, to obtain the data embodied in the well-known *Fortune* Polls. The Gallup Survey is released fortnightly to a large number of newspapers subscribing to the service, and the *Fortune* Poll is issued as a rule every three months, this time within three per cent.

The methods used by these two organizations are essentially scientific and based on sound statistical technique. They should not be confused with polls carried out by magazines, such as *Liberty Magazine*, whose methods were unscientific, and which relied on mail questionnaires answered by those people who had the inclination to reply to them. It is this confusion between opinion research carried out on a scientific basis and that by ignorant imitators, which has prevented people, particularly in this country, which distrusts anything American anyway, from realizing that there has grown up in the past decade a new science of sociology and a new instrument of democracy. The incredibly ill-informed questions in the House of Commons about the house-to-house investigation carried out by the Ministry of Information provided an excellent example of this confusion and lack of knowledge. It is difficult to believe that the violent criticism of the scheme which appeared in nearly all the daily newspapers was also a result of ignorance, though it may have been. It seems more likely that it was due to a determination of the newspapers to get rid, by the use of completely unscrupulous methods, of a Minister they did not like because he had once had it in mind severely to restrict their freedom.

In this country, besides the offshoot of the Gallup Survey, sponsored by the *News-Chronicle* under the title of The British Institute of Public Opinion, there is no recognized opinion-finding organization which is both scientific in method and whose findings are released to the general public. There is the newly-formed Wartime Social Survey (Cooper's Snoopers), set up by the Ministry of Information, which is, no doubt, doing excellent work, although it is doubtful whether the personnel have had sufficient practical experience in this field as yet. In any event, its findings are known by the Government and not by the general public. There are several excellent organizations, attached to advertising agencies or working independently, which, in technique, are probably more advanced than any other bodies in this

country. But they are concerned solely with the reaction of people to commercial products and have not as yet done any work connected with purely social problems. Lastly, there is Tom Harrisson and Mass-Observation. Here is a group of people who realize only too well the real need for accurate information on the state of people's minds and who, through their publications, have done work of great value in bringing this realization home to the man-in-the-street. Besides concerning themselves mainly with social problems, the result of their work is released to the public in the form of books and newspaper articles. Their activities are, however, subject to severe limitations in that they do not attempt to provide data representative of an accurate cross-section of the country. They take groups of people and study their reactions intensively, but we have no assurance or indeed any evidence that the people so studied are typical of people in the nation as a whole. That is not to say that the information so uncovered is not far more accurate a guide to public opinion than are the statements of politicians or the policies of newspaper owners. It undoubtedly is. But Tom Harrisson could never tell us, for example, who would win a general election or what percentage of the nation is satisfied with Churchill as Premier.

It is clear, therefore, that, in making our analysis of the state of mind of the people we wish to influence with propaganda, we must use as far as possible the statistical technique of recently developed social science. If this is not done, the resulting propaganda lacks effectiveness because it is not constructed to fit in with the psychological situation existing in its field of operation. An excellent example of this can be found in the failure of German propaganda in England during this summer. If Dr. Goebbels had had accurate data on public opinion in this country, he would never have adopted his terror tactics, which have only resulted in at last waking the people up and endowing them with a will to conquer.

III

The first two sections of this article emphasized the importance played by propaganda in Hitler's almost bloodless victories, stressed the essential similarity of the problems of political and commercial propaganda, and pointed out how the first stage in the construction of a propaganda campaign of either type is, in the words of Doctor

Goebbels: 'to diagnose with an almost scientific precision the people's soul, to be informed of all psychology in citizenry'. When we have this it is possible to decide on our propaganda objectives. Some people will say that the decision as to objectives should come first, and it is true that the general objective should be defined in advance. For example, such objectives as 'we want to sell more of this brand of chocolate', or 'we want this particular country to declare war against Germany', are, in most cases, the reason for undertaking the planning of a campaign, with its necessary opinion research as the first step. But very often the findings of the research will require modification of even so generally defined aims as these. It may be discovered that the brand of chocolate is so disliked and packed so inconveniently in the view of the prospective purchasers that it is impossible to sell any more of it whatever propaganda is issued. It may become obvious that to get the particular country concerned to declare war against our enemy is something beyond any reasonable bounds of expectation. The people of the country may be so sympathetic with the ideals of our enemy that it would not undertake any military expedition at the present time, except against us. Or the people may be so wanting in morale that such a country would be quickly overrun by the enemy and thus be a handicap as an ally. In such an instance the general objective would have to be revised in the light of the data disclosed to be one of keeping the country neutral or, at the most, non-interventionist in our favour.

In the case of a political campaign aimed at a neutral, occupied or enemy country, it will be possible to see that certain jobs of opinion changing are needed. It may have been found that the people of the country have a completely false idea as regards our naval strength in the Mediterranean; that they feel Great Britain is not really a democracy, but a nation run by an exclusive ruling class; that the British Empire is intent on seizing French possessions under the guise of liberating France; that, after the war, we intend to divide up the neutral country concerned amongst other powers who have helped us more directly in the prosecution of victory. Many such beliefs and states of mind will be revealed, some with much truth at their base, some fantastic in conception. The point to realize is that it is quite impossible to design propaganda until we know accurately what people are thinking and what they believe, what their prejudices are, why they hate us,

why they like us and why they are indifferent. In parallel words we must know why people buy other brands of chocolate and not ours, why some people do buy our chocolate, why they do not buy more of it and more often, whether they dislike the way it is packed, the raisins it is packed with, the colour or the taste, or whether they have great difficulty in finding a shop which stocks it. It is on this data that the campaign must be based, as the information affects every problem faced.

The analysis of the state of mind of the people will also reveal another fact of primary importance. It will show that any group of people, like the members of a nation, subdivide themselves into a number of minor groups, all of whom have different interests at stake in respect of the nation's relationships with other countries. The same thing exists, of course, in the case of the branded product. There we find that urban dwellers like one brand, while agricultural communities prefer another; that people in hard-water areas prefer a type of soap that lathers easily, which is not the case in soft-water districts; that one income group prefers a differently designed product than another income group; and so on. In the political field, it will be found that the Jewish element have different reasons for wanting the defeat of Hitler than the rest of the country; that the Catholics' viewpoint about their country's foreign policy is not the same as that of the workers' organizations, or again, as that of the *petit-bourgeois*; that the farmers want a policy which differs from that wanted by the industrial leaders; that the aristocracy are up to a scheme all on their own. Each country has its own particular sub-groupings, and these must be discovered, their influence appraised, their opinions analysed, and a *propaganda plan and policy constructed for each*. In other words, the process described above in connection with the country as a whole must also be gone through as well in the case of each of the minor groups.

The advertising programme of a manufacturer's product is dependent on the policy of the company as a whole. It may be decided to develop one kind of product at the expense of another, there may not be enough money for the promotion of certain lines, raw materials may not be available for the production of some goods, new machinery may be required before other designs can be manufactured. Thus the advertising policy of any product must be a co-ordinated part of the policy for the successful

operation of the whole enterprise. In exactly the same way, political propaganda must be co-ordinated with every other part of the war effort, with each of the armed services, with each of the other government departments. This means that the War Cabinet must come to some decision as regards Peace Aims. It is only arising from this that any sincere or convincing propaganda policy can be formulated for all and each of the nations and sub-groups involved. It also means that whoever is in charge of propaganda activities should be a member of the War Cabinet. Otherwise conflicts will arise between propaganda efforts and military efforts, between propaganda activities and those of other government departments. The person who heads up propaganda activities must be fully acquainted with the grand strategy of the war so that perfect co-ordination and timing is made possible.

This co-ordination is not only necessary between propaganda activities and those of all other government departments. It is equally necessary in the carrying out of all propaganda work itself which is aimed at any one nation or group of people. If this is not ensured much waste takes place and the whole effort is weakened through the propaganda cancelling itself out and bringing confusion to the minds of the recipients.

Much has been said of the manner in which German propaganda differs according to which country or group it is directed. It is stated that the contradictory nature of this material is a weakness because the members of one group find out what is being said to the other groups, and the cat is thus out of the bag. It would not seem, however, that this is so, because the proportion of each group which has the knowledge of languages or the facilities to find out what the other groups are being told must be very small. If we ourselves take the trouble to inform the groups of the inconsistency, they are apt to regard it as propaganda on our part and for this reason to discount it. Admittedly, Nazi propaganda is weakened in this way, but it is likely that this is nowhere near sufficient to offset the immense strength given to the propaganda by its being designed to exploit to the utmost the specific psychological situation existing in each of the groups addressed. Thus, while co-ordination of all propaganda activity directed at any one group is vital, it is not so essential (though it is desirable) that complete consistency between statements issued to different groups is maintained.

After fifteen months of conflict the Ministry of Information is still carrying out its propaganda in a wretchedly feeble and amateurish way. What we learned in the last war, and which our enemies have made the most of, we have pooh-poohed and bungled.

It has been explained that no improvement can be expected until those in authority realize the exact parallel which exists between commercial and political propaganda and decide to make use of those people who have spent their lives in the former occupation and who are quite capable of selling anybody anything, let alone an attitude of mind about Britain. In other words, we should follow Beverley Baxter's advice given in the House of Commons to Lord MacMillan when he was Minister of Information. 'I do urge the Minister not to let suitability for the job rule people out entirely.' Moreover, it is not sufficient to employ a few advertising men in minor positions in the Ministry of Information. This simply means that their whole time is occupied in trying to convince the out-of-a-job diplomats and retired admirals of the simplest facts about the psychology of selling, facts which any commercial traveller or office boy in an advertising agency has known since he entered the business. These experts in the profession of propaganda must be given real power so that they are able to formulate plans and policies even the necessity for which is not realized at the moment by those who should be making them.

Once the question of personnel has been solved there arises the question of into what form of organization they should be arranged. All experience has indicated that the functional type of organization, as opposed to the military type, is that which is required for the effective operation of creative bodies. It is a form in direct contrast to that used by Government Departments, but only with this form of organization will the greatest use be made of individual creative ability. Under the type of organization now in use by the Civil Service it is impossible for ideas to be interchanged freely, as communication between personnel has to follow a strict system of memoranda and meetings fixed in advance. It is not possible for individuals to follow up creative suggestions which occur to them immediately and informally, because reference first has to be made to the person above them in the rigid hierarchy, and after that to the everlasting liaison officers

who act as inter-representatives of departments. The result is that all originality and vigour has been knocked out of any plan by the time it has reached a stage where it can have some effect on affairs. A complete reversal of this state of affairs exists, for example, in a big advertising agency. Here a member of one department has completely free access to any member of another department. A writer, for example, can walk down the corridor and discuss an idea with any artist, media expert, executive, market research specialist, radio producer, poster expert, statistician, or any other member of the company who, he feels, will be able to help him. In this way immense time is saved, as unsatisfactory suggestions are discarded with a minimum of delay, while an idea with merit receives the co-operation of the brains whose experience and talent can contribute most. The governing director of London's most successful advertising agency is 'Dick' to everyone. It provides an example of a democracy which is complete and which has produced better results than any other competing organization. The efficiency of the pseudo-democratic organizations known as bureaucracy offers an interesting contrast.

The final requisite for a competent propaganda administration is the placing of a man of exceptional energy and initiative in command, so that this attitude will be infused downwards throughout the whole organization. This, of course, is a need not only felt in connection with propaganda, most other departments suffer too. If only we had twenty Beaverbrooks!

IV

Had these principles been followed, how different would have been the campaign on the Empire just completed in the Press by the Ministry of Information. What is the objective of this campaign? It is difficult to tell. Some people questioned have stated that they think it is to tell English people that they have got some allies who have not yet surrendered or been defeated. If this is so it would seem to be totally unnecessary, as the newspapers are full of accounts of Empire troops arriving in this country, of New Zealand ships in action, of Mr. Eden reviewing Australians in the Near East. Other people say that the aim of the campaign is to 'butter up' the Dominion troops in this country so that they will fight better for us. Again this would appear a

redundant effort, as what Dominion troops I have talked with are not the type to succumb to this sort of flattery.

The real objective is probably a belated reply to Hitler's New Order in Europe, pointing out that we have had a New Order in the world for some time now. The very fact that the objective of the campaign is not clear, that different people carry away different impressions, that one message is not imprinted in the mind of every reader is enough criticism in itself. But the fact that we have had to run this campaign at all is an indication of a sad lack in our Imperial administration over the last ten years. As the advertisements try so hard to say, here we have an association of free countries that, on sheer idealism and moral grounds, beats Hitler's slave Empire into a cocked military cap. The absolute freedom of the component countries in this arrangement was dramatized in the first few weeks of the war by the arguments in the South African Parliament as to whether that nation should declare war on Germany. Again, by the neutrality of Eire and the present problem of naval bases. The utter stupidity of it is magnificent propaganda if properly handled. Experts on American public opinion have said that one of the chief factors which made that country feel it had a moral obligation to join in the struggle was the example of Canada. Here was a nation with one-tenth the population of themselves and even less that proportion of national wealth, which, at the same time, enjoyed the safety of the Atlantic Ocean, actually declaring war on Germany immediately and with complete freedom of choice.

The story is superb. Yet so little has it been impressed on other countries that Hitler's New Order in Europe propaganda has come dangerously near success. And, final indictment, the government which is responsible for initiating this most sane and practical arrangement of human affairs is actually driven by necessity to explain and 'sell it' to its own citizens. That is really the tragedy of all our propaganda. We have such a first-rate story to tell, the truth is so much on our side, yet it is told so badly that Goebbels can get away with practically any concoction he wants to.

But, admitting we have been remiss in allowing the Empire to have become a joke and rather discredited, what else is wrong with the campaign with which we are trying to remedy this lapse, besides the confusion of objective which it leaves in the mind of

the reader? The main criticism lies in the fact that it lacks emotion in its appeal and simplicity in its approach. Its objective, and the media selected, indicate that it is aimed at people of all income groups. Three-quarters of the population of Great Britain, and, therefore, of the campaign's intended readers, live in families with incomes of less than £4 per week. All commercial advertising experience indicates that the masses of the people will not be influenced by an advertisement unless it makes a strong appeal to at least one fundamental emotion and, at the same time, avoids requiring the reader to make any intellectual effort. Not only will he not be influenced by it, but he will not even read it. This latter situation may be modified to a certain extent in the case of an advertisement obviously issued by the Government, as there is a feeling of moral obligation amongst some people that they should read Government pronouncements as well as a fear that they may miss some instructions affecting their everyday lives. But as soon as these two wants are satisfied, there is no difference between the reaction of the reader to the Government advertisement and the commercial advertisement.

The advertisements in the Empire Campaign fulfil neither of the two essentials mentioned. They have no strong emotional appeal; the copy is difficult for the under-educated to understand, it is stiff reading for anyone who does not take in *The Spectator*.

What is the effect on the mass reader, the bus conductor, the coal miner, the electrician, the farm labourer, the factory worker or the hall-porter, when he sees the advertisement in the paper? He sees a tone-drawing of a soldier, and below, the word 'Australia', 'New Zealand' or 'India'. What is there to make him feel he should read it? Is there anything which leads the reader to think that here is something which will help him in his daily problems or provide entertainment as a means of escaping them? The answer, of course, is No. The whole thing could not be duller to anyone who does not happen to be intellectually interested in one or other of the countries mentioned in the headline.

But, because it looks like a Government advertisement, some people may read the copy, or start reading it. What do they read? 'Canada is the home of an independent nation of the New World. With her mighty neighbour she helps to guard the freedom of the Western Hemisphere.' Is this easy for the bus conductor to understand without that bit of intellectual effort which, as all

advertising experience has proved, is too much to ask him to make? 'By the end of September Canada had sent us 240,000,000 lb. of electrolytic copper, part of an enormous output of minerals of all kinds, including most of the world's supply of metal.' So what? It is all right if you read the *Financial Times*. Or if you have shares in International Nickel. But it will not do if you want to tell the man-in-the-street. 'Of her own free will Canada is in the vanguard of the Crusade against the evil things.' Try talking like that to the next working man you meet and see what you get. And from the lesson headed 'New Zealand': 'When New Zealand entered the war her Prime Minister said: "We range ourselves without fear beside Britain. Where she goes, we go; where she stands, we stand." . . . "Where she stands, we stand," said the Prime Minister of New Zealand. "*Where you stand, we stand*," comes the answer from our hearts.' What would be the circulation of the *Daily Express* if it wrote like that? But the people responsible for propaganda at the Ministry of Information are not the type of people who read the *Daily Express*. They read dignified, intellectual, erudite publications and enjoy them. So this is the sort of advertising copy that they like to read. And after all, that's really what matters, isn't it?

So we see that the writing is so intellectual that the ordinary reader cannot take it in and ends up by being confused as well as bored. The logotype, 'A Commonwealth in Arms', suffers from the same limitations. The word 'commonwealth' is not well known to or easily understood by the common man and woman: the phrase lacks any emotional inspiration.

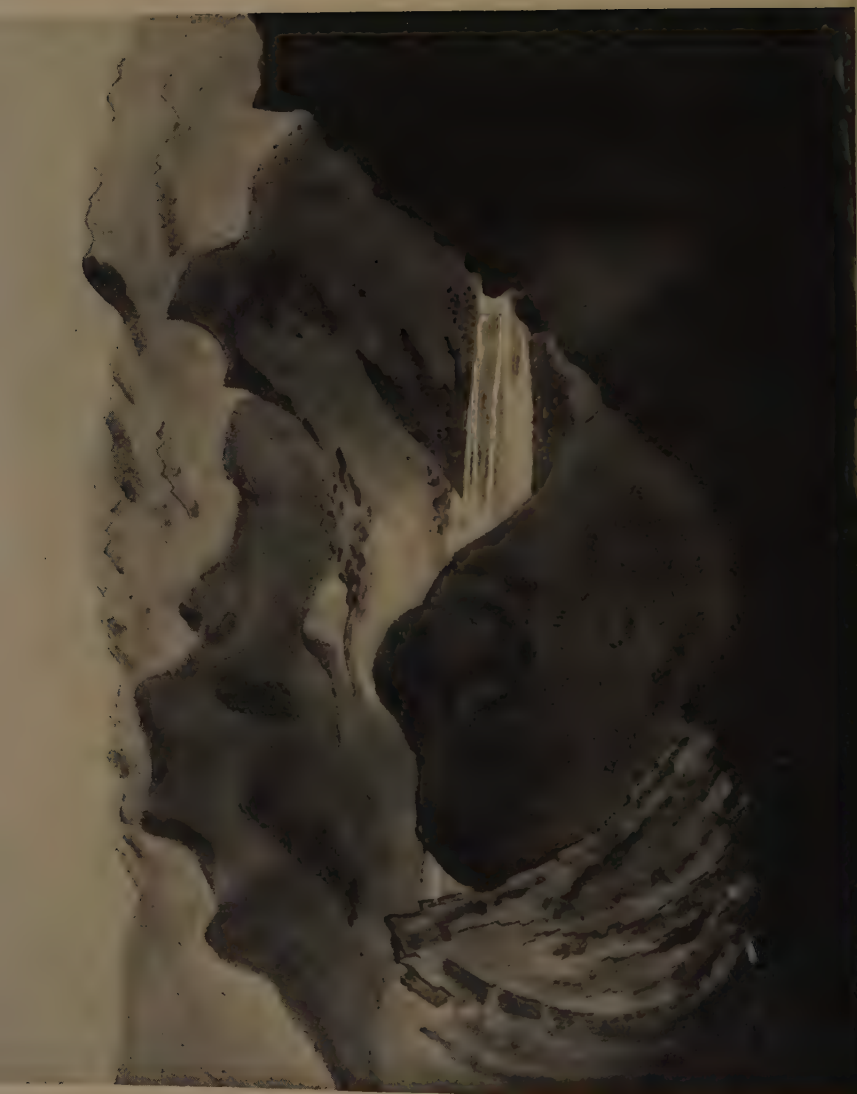
The campaign, therefore, will only be *read* by two groups of people: (a) those who feel they ought to read it because it appears to be a Government announcement; (b) those actually intellectually interested in the Empire. It will only be *understood* and *effective* in the case of the second group, which is, of course, extremely small and probably fully cognisant of the facts anyway.

V

In summary, therefore, it is necessary that the following basic essentials are fulfilled if we are going to make use of a weapon which has proved itself, both in this war and the last, to be as potent as any one of the three military services.

1. Recognition by the War Cabinet of the necessity of defining Peace Aims.
2. In respect of each nation and group of people affected, a scientific analysis of their state of mind.
3. Arising out of the above, the formulation of a policy and plan for the creation and distribution of propaganda material to each group.
4. The inclusion in the War Cabinet of the individual who is placed in charge of this work.
5. The co-ordination of propaganda effort with the striking forces of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and with other governmental activities.
6. The co-ordination of all propaganda activities directed at any one area or group of people.
7. The placing in positions of real authority of men with a lifetime of experience in successfully planning and prosecuting propaganda campaigns for commercial purposes.
8. The arrangement of the creative personnel in a functional type of organization instead of a military type.
9. The appointment of a Beaverbrook in command.

Until these simple principles are followed, Hitler's secret weapon will be that which there is least secrecy about. Propaganda has been talked of, even by the English, for the past four years as a devastating instrument of international as well as of national accomplishment. Yet to the distinguished civil servants this simple fact does not seem to have penetrated. At the medical inspection which precedes enlistment in the services the recruit is given a test for colour-blindness. Perhaps some test for weapon-blindness could be devised for our leading administrators. It is likely that the demand for psycho-analysts to diagnose hysterical dissociative tendencies would be considerable.



ROLAND LUSHINGTON

HAPPY ALL ALONE

THERE was something horribly lowering, like a hand dragging at the guts, in the slow, jerking ascension of the funicular. Painfully creaking, yard by yard, the narrow box with the hard, shiny wooden seats was cogwheeled at an angle of forty-five degrees up the mountain-side. If you were facing forward, the ungiving wood pressed heavily into the small of your back like a dead-weight on labouring lungs; if you faced backward, slowly but inevitably you slid off the bench. And the goal of this unremitting wearying climb was a dead end. The railway got there and stopped. You could not go anywhere from Monte Sano. If you were lucky you eventually came down again, but you were no longer the same. Monte Sano had changed you. It changed everyone who passed any length of time there, and only the good and wise changed for the better. The others changed for the worse. They were cured, perhaps, in body, but something had happened to their minds. Many stayed on in Monte Sano, although the doctors said that they were cured, unable any more to face life on the plain.

Howard knew this, and he felt something of the depression, but he was not in reality very much affected by it. He had confidence in his power to use the months of solitude, silence, and inaction for profit rather than for loss. Marcia came more strongly under its influence. She knew Monte Sano by hearsay—a place with sixty sanatoriums, and one motor vehicle, the hearse that took down the dead at night. For the sick, these things seemed natural enough, for the well they were intolerable. Her heart sank as the train climbed. But she hid her horror from Howard, who seemed to be accepting misfortune with an Eastern indifference. Now, in his illness, he had become almost a stranger. She looked at him as he sat hunched on the narrow seat opposite her, watching the first jerk past and down as the train climbed through the forest, his long jaw set, and she thought that now he was leaving her for an indefinite period, and she did not know him at all.

He turned his head and looked at her, and she saw that there was that vague, untouchable sadness in his eyes—no, it was not

that. It was something else, a more definite pain. Then he smiled and it disappeared.

They did not see the doctor that night. Howard was installed in his bare, white room with the hard, flat bed and the row of bell-pushes by it, nurse, waiter, chambermaid. From his cure gallery he could see far below to the right the lights of the plain. He could not see it in the dark, but along that plain there wound the great river that emptied itself at last into the Mediterranean.

Marcia was staying in the only hotel in the place that was for healthy people. She would come back in the morning to be with Howard when the doctors examined him.

They had to wait for more than half an hour in the uncomfortable waiting-room of the Medical Wing before the doctors could see them. There were two doctors. Doctor Meurice, the chief, was one of the most famous specialists in tuberculosis in the world. He was a youngish man with handsome, tired face and beautiful soft manners. He was a little inclined to overdo the handsome tiredness and the manners, and his friends said that he was spoilt by his women patients. Most of his patients were women, all of them rich, many had husbands they were glad to get away from, and these looked forward to their annual cure at Doctor Meurice's Sanatorium as the best part of their year. Doctor Meurice had long ago given up trying to persuade them that they were cured. With men, and with women who were really ill, he was more serious. But something of the handsome tiredness and the manners remained. He had married a sensible and wealthy Swiss woman, and they had two children. He never mentioned his family.

The other doctor, his assistant, was cheerful and polite, and always agreed with Doctor Meurice.

There were several women patients in the waiting-room and in the passage outside. Tall, hollow-chested, round-shouldered, with wilting breasts and very white hands, they drifted about in magnificent pyjamas, showing open or covert interest in Howard according to their natures. After he had seen each one, Doctor Meurice conducted her along the passage, past the open door of the waiting-room, as far as the door leading to the residential part of the sanatorium. He usually held her by the arm just above the elbow, talking and gesticulating softly with his other hand.

When it came to Howard's turn his manner changed. It became

rather more brisk and professional, and at the same time it conveyed a note of humorous apology for whatever he and Marcia might have observed of the other business. Once they were in the darkened room, lit only by a blue lamp on the doctor's desk, and in the shadows of which lurked complicated and terrifying machines, he became efficiency itself. He asked Howard a great many questions, writing down the answers, then made him undress to the waist. 'Cough,' he repeated monotonously, tapping and listening, 'again. Cough. Cough. Again. Cough.' The assistant doctor looked on helpfully. When Doctor Meurice had done enough of that he led Howard by the hand to one of the machines and showed him where to stand in the middle of it, with his chest pressing against an icy metal plate. 'Turn to the right,' he chanted. 'Turn to the left. Breathe deeply. Turn round. Cough.' The assistant came and looked over Doctor Meurice's shoulder. They muttered together, that is, Doctor Meurice muttered and the other one said 'yes.' Suddenly Doctor Meurice said in a loud voice:

'Ca va s'arranger tout seul.'

'Perfectly,' said the other.

'Put on your pyjamas,' said Doctor Meurice. He smiled at Marcia and led the way into his office, which was lighted by daylight and had comfortable chairs. 'For a preliminary examination,' he said, 'that was very satisfactory.'

Marcia said nothing. She had no faith in remarks made by doctors in that loud voice.

'Both lungs are affected,' said Doctor Meurice. 'There are in all three cavities, one in the right lung and two in the left, but they are high up and that is good. Later, when we have the photos I will show them to you.'

Marcia said: 'What do you think—how long—'

'That is impossible to say.' Doctor Meurice smiled at Howard. 'Next spring we will discuss it.'

Next spring. That was about six months.

'In the meanwhile,' said the doctor, 'rest. Absolute rest.'

'But surely there is something to be done?'

'For the moment, dear madame, rest, absolute rest, is indicated

The assistant came in and took Howard away to see the radiologist.

'Now, dear madame,' said Doctor Meurice, 'we can talk more freely. Your husband is very dangerously ill. It is not a new thing. He has had it for four or five years already.'

'But why didn't we know?'

'You have been married long?'

'Oh no. Not two years yet.'

'The disease is like that. It remains latent. And then something—some shock? Some worry or unhappiness?'

His look made Marcia feel that somehow, in that brief examination of Howard, he had read all the secrets of their married life. But she shook her head and he waved his suggestions aside immediately. He did not want to insist on them. His smile was tired, sweet, superior.

'Nothing, then,' he said. '*Un rien*. Who knows?'

'Do you mean that my husband is going to die?'

'When I say that he is dangerously ill,' said Doctor Meurice, smoothly, 'I mean that in his present state he is far too weak to support any surgery, even if it were advisable. And I must tell you that I am far from recommending it. Sometimes a pneumothorax, sometimes a few ribs removed, prove useful. But rest is the thing—rest and the air of Monte Sano. And the snow. You understand, madame, I do not claim myself to heal tuberculosis. It is merely that my great experience enables me to advise. The air, and rest, and silence, and sleep—these are the healers.'

Later, when he was showing Marcia to the door of the Medical Wing, he held her arm just above the elbow, talking and gesticulating with his other hand. He was telling her something that was a relief to her, although she was ashamed of feeling relieved.

'Isn't that wonderful?' she said to Howard. 'All you have to do is just lie here and get well.'

'Yes,' he said. 'Did the doctor say anything about your staying up here?'

'Well . . .' Marcia said, thinking of what the doctor had told her, 'did he say anything to you about it?'

'He said: "you will have your wife here with you for a few more days, and after that you will see—*ça ira tout seul*. When you have acquired the mentality of an invalid you will not even wish to see anyone. You will be happy to be alone.'"

He sounded very tired, and bitter. Marcia did not know what to say.

'And so he told you that—I ought to go?'

'He appeared to take it for granted that you would.'

The bitterness in his voice annoyed Marcia. It was as though he blamed her for having to go. It was most unfair.

'Well, he told me I could stay if I liked, but that he did not advise it. He said I should only upset you and interfere with the cure. He said it depended—some people needed their wives or mothers with them, others were better without. He said you were the type that was better without.'

Howard smiled briefly.

'Perhaps,' he said, 'he meant that you were the type of wife that was better away.'

'I don't know why he should think that,' said Marcia.

'I don't know why either,' said Howard, wearily. He felt his mind as a puppet, but the strings pulled contradictory ways, they cancelled each other out. His mind could not obey them, he was too tired. The thing was that Marcia was going. She was going, and she would be away for a long time, without him. He would not be there to protect her. No, that was absurd. He wanted to be there so that he could protect himself.

'So,' Marcia said, 'I suppose I had better go. Darling, will you be all right without me?'

'Yes,' he said.

'I could come and see you again soon.'

'Yes, naturally.'

'After all, I suppose the doctor knows best.'

'I suppose so.'

'You see, darling, you aren't even supposed to talk.'

'No.'

'So it wouldn't be much use—I mean, there wouldn't be much object—you see, he says it would excite you and send your temperature up just to see me —'

'Am I allowed to think?' said Howard.

'What do you mean?'

'Am I supposed not to think as I lie here?'

'Well, but . . . but you can read too. There is a very good library here, Doctor Meurice says. And you can write.'

'Yes,' said Howard. 'But some of the time I shall have to think.'

'Why, yes, darling. You can think of me.'

Howard raised himself in bed and looked at her. That innocent stare! It *was* innocent too. And she was not stupid. But if she was not stupid she was—no, it was useless. He could not say it. She must know what he meant. And if she did know and yet did not help him, she was cruel.

‘Yes,’ he said. ‘I can think of you.’

‘And I will think of you.’

Yes. She would think of him. She would think of him a lot. She would think of him all the time, he did not doubt it. But that would not stop her.

‘And you must work too,’ he said.

‘No,’ she said lightly, ‘I think I’ll leave that for a bit.’

He forced himself to change the subject. He joked about the nurse, who was plain and wore spectacles. A real Swiss cheese, he said. But how healthy, Marcia said. And there were masses of lovely wan women for him to choose from, drooping about the place. . . . He smiled and shook his head. There was his chance to say what he wanted to say. Open the subject again, bring it in easily. There was still time. No, Marcia was talking again, now it was too late. He had let the chance go by.

After that, until Marcia left they were tender and light, almost gay. They talked about Christmas, when she would come again and he would be better, perhaps up and able to go out for walks. At the final leave-taking, Howard knew that he would never be able to say what he wanted to say. Perhaps she would say it. It would not matter if she did not keep the promise, but if she would say it he could remember that. He would not know what happened anyhow, but if she would only say it. . . .

She smoothed his hair and kissed him on the forehead.

‘Good-bye, darling,’ was all she said. ‘Don’t you worry.’

‘No,’ he said. ‘I won’t worry.’

As she closed his door after her she saw a printed notice on it: Visitors Forbidden.

G. W. STONIER

THE END OF A TRADITION

TWO and a half shelves, or a little under three hundred titles, contain my entire library of French writing. Unlike the rest of my books, which sprawl hideously and unaccountably as London, these few are well chosen. They fall into a personal order. Each of them, that is to say, corresponds with an event or impulse in my life; each was picked up, bought, borrowed, ransacked with the vision of a lover. Even the occasional bad book is there for a reason; cherished perhaps the more because it hints directions one may hope to travel oneself. All reading, of course, should be guided by a like infallibility, but for one cause or another—accidie, self-effacement, or the trade winds of reviewing—our shelves tend to accommodate a thousand and one well-hated volumes which we hesitate to discard. The critic is married, for better or worse, to the literature of his own country, including all he despises and condemns most, and his only outlet is to have an affair abroad—an affair of coming and going, long absences and well-nurtured desires, lasting maybe a lifetime. Such, at any rate, have been my own relations with French literature during the past fifteen years.

From May to July 1940, I found it impossible to read or even open any book written in French. After the Netherlands—France, Paris itself. One more battered, newsless country! Like many others, I registered the shock politically, in calculations of the advance upon ourselves. A map confronted us blankly. Dieppe had been bombed by the R.A.F.? Good—but there flickered the memory of peeling arcades, and friendly faces in *bistros*, along a charming old waterfront. The sense of tragedy comes trivially and slowly—more slowly than Hitler's successes—and while we were still haunted by fleeing peasants and a burning countryside, the Gestapo was making its swoop. It was then I looked again at my shelves of French writers, and the eye moved uneasily when it reached the names of the living: Gide, Malraux, Valéry, Julien

Green, Jouhandeau—which among those would have escaped? I chose the last two as being most remote from war. Julien Green's *Journal* 1928–1934, and Jouhandeau's *Images de Paris* were books I re-read. If I had hoped to escape thinking of war and of the possible fate of two authors, I was deceiving myself. The first (and I had hardly noticed this before!) contained a brilliant self-portrait lit by uneasiness for the future: 'if war comes', '*when the war comes*'—this was written seven, twelve years ago, when our own peace of mind was still uncracked. From Julien Green's *Journal*, a model of how the small writer should manage his life and extend his talent, I turned to Jouhandeau. He also, though in some of his books he has sprawled across the page, is a small writer, a *petit-mâitre*, such as only the French tradition seems capable of producing. His 'images'—anecdotes, snapshots, lyrical epigrams, arising out of the habit of street-gazing—brought back in loving and humorous detail the Paris I had known, the spectacle I had been trying, while Nazi motorized units were on the way, to keep out of my mind.

As I turned over the pages, the streets of 1934, with their girls and fat women and workmen in tennis shoes, their elegant or crumbling vistas, turned over the calendar to 1940. It was, for example, a remarkably fine summer in Paris as well as London, and day after day this fact was clashing in the minds of Parisians with the other fact, that Hitler had at last launched his invasion. The brilliant weather, theatres, a buzz of conversation in cafés and round kiosks, map-plotting, lights in the Seine at night, the excitement of the first *alertes* ('Oh, oh, an aeroplane!'), rumours scarcely more fantastic than the facts, *strapontin* and 'bus observation deck, the radio, meals in little restaurants, evenings in the Bois de Boulogne and Sunday morning at the Vincennes Zoo, Bonnet's villainous mug at a War Office window, meetings with Picasso, the Sacré Cœur by moonlight, the disasters of Sedan and the Meuse, a single-sheet newspaper, and duck specially recommended by the *patron*; one could see it only too well. Experience, in this war, far outstrips action, and if there is one thing we all know by heart and have been conning for years down to the last detail, it is the fall of cities. What China did not teach us we found at Madrid; or if for any reason we missed that, there was Warsaw. Hitler gave us a whole winter and a spring to digest that; then the stampede, one capital city after another, culminating in Paris.

When Paris fell, we had already allowed for 'the fall of Paris' (any journalist sitting in Fleet Street could have written up events as accurately as the man on the spot), and we managed to put a good face on it while the shock wore off. That period of indifference, of aching indifference, is over. Few of us get news enough to know how many Frenchmen are starving, how many killed by our night bombers, and I am no longer afraid to look at my shelves of French writers. But what I read in them reads like a postscript.

Is it really the end of a tradition? So far as writing goes, and the literary tradition of the last eighty years, I think it is. Whatever changes war and politics may produce in the French people, their literature, as we have known it since Flaubert, is ended. A few who are lucky enough to escape may go on writing 'without a break'; a few will be martyrs, or will fraternize with the Germans, like Guitry, and die out; but, in better or worse times to come, there will be no starting again where writers left off in the summer of 1940. It looks at the moment as though the alternatives facing the French people are regionalism under Hitler or revolution in a starving Europe; the only literature that could exist under the first would be a submerged satire (remember the anti-Quisling attacks in Sweden in the form of newspaper articles about rats), and a second French Revolution would be a great deal less accommodating to writers than that of 1792. Malraux, if he survives, seems one of the few who could sustain the break, but even a novel by him, written, say, in 1945, would be very different from Malraux 1938.

The first tradition to go is the ivory tower. Marvell lived through civil war, commonwealth and restoration, until his walled garden closed in on him; Flaubert had Prussian officers billeted in his house at Croisset and returned to write *Bouvard et Pécuchet*. But war or revolution still passed by its non-combatants in those days. There is no need to say more about ivory towers; new ones will be built, the old are gone.

Nor do I mean by tradition something that goes back, with an uninterrupted history, to Boileau or Villon. That, if it exists, is a national and not a literary tradition. What I shall attempt to define is the atmosphere, the assets, props and necessities with which every French writer of talent (poet, novelist or critic) has grown up in recent years; and taking as my examples the two books, not in themselves of great importance, already mentioned.

Journal, 1928-34: Julien Green. The first thing to notice is that his is not an inflated talent. He is not, like so many of the successful, an inferior writer pretending to greatness, but a good minor novelist struggling hard to become very good. (Among minor novelists, let me say, I should include such masters as Stevenson and Jules Renard.) He carries the germ of self-improvement. Awkward—yes, it rules out the possibility of an easy hit; his work changes and grows. And only a comparatively small section of his public is capable of growing up with him. Readers who look solely for entertainment in a novelist are apt to dismiss him impatiently; he selects gloomy themes, he is not always completely master of them, his realities are just too high above common experience, and just not striking enough to penetrate an insensitive mind.

The six years of his diary (another volume has been added since) record the uneventful life of a man of some fifty years: a life dedicated, Goncourt-wise, to literature. With difficulty he manages his twenty to thirty lines a day. Those who know his novels will recognize the rainy days, winter landscape and fears going back to childhood which are the centre of his work. He began as a novelist by letting his imagination twist into violent shapes—a fault not uncommon with the ultra-sensitive, and to some extent cut himself off from what he was writing. His later work—*Le Visionnaire*, the somnambulistic and lovely *Minuit*—shows a far deeper originality. At sixty he might (if the war has not destroyed him in mind or body) produce his masterpiece.

Here is a writer who has worked tirelessly to create himself (not all are born made), and whose reward has been the inchmeal advancement that only comes to so persevering and lonely a talent. Green happens to bear an American name, and the circumstance has given him, this side of the Channel, the reputation of an amateur. Nothing could be further from the truth; he is, in upbringing and outlook, as French as Sisley. Compared with any English writer of similar talent, his life is rigidly professional. He works harder, he digs deeper into himself, he achieves more. The French tradition helps such a writer enormously. It provides him with two strings to his bow, for besides what he writes in public—his novels, poetry, or whatever it may be—he undertakes also the task of documenting himself. Truth begins at home (few writers outside France have admitted this). Throughout his life the

comparison between his published works and his private journal will be before him as a touchstone of sincerity. What a gap, to start with, between the two, how many heartrending contradictions! Every writer begins by being two men, who walk on opposite sides of the road, and it is only by the unremitting exercise of talent that the two can be made to meet. Note the following passage:

‘Très préoccupé par mon roman. Il existe une vérité à laquelle il faut atteindre à tout prix, celle qui est au cœur “de tout homme venant en ce monde.” Ce n’est pas une vérité de roman, ce n’est pas cet air de vraisemblance qui fait crier d’admiration les amateurs. Non, pour trouver la vérité, il faut travailler contre soi-même, contre sa pente, contre les facilités que donne l’habitude, contre le succès, contre le public; il faut supprimer toutes les pages où l’amusement du lecteur est le seul objet en vue. Les mots forment une sorte de courant qu’il faut sans cesse remonter; qui cède à leur entraînement va droit à l’échec, car il devient impossible, après avoir longtemps abusé les mots, de leur faire dire la vérité.’

This expresses admirably one of the chief realities of a writer’s life, which the French have been more capable of facing than we. I have met few English novelists who could talk out straight, few who were not fundamentally complacent or afraid of themselves. Arnold Bennett scared of his own timidity! A stammer accompanied his pomp; when he posed for a photograph, the effect of that cockatoo head would be spoilt by a rucked trouser-leg, of which he was unaware. And the level of self-knowledge in his journals? ‘Bought socks in Bond Street, dined at Savoy, this year written 1,000,000 words.’

Switch to Jouhandeau. He is a fanatic, with a poet’s impulse. Where Green plods, he jumps like a kettle nearing the boil and gives out strange little tunes. Tradition has helped him as much, but in other ways. Before one has read far in *Images* it becomes obvious where this side of him—the mass-observer of people and streets—has its source.

‘Pour mettre à l’air ses jambes, sans qu’elles effraient le monde, un mendiant cherche sous le pont l’endroit le plus noir et les y expose. De temps en temps son visage s’empourpre de ferveur. On se demande à quoi il pense. C’est qu’en sourdine il se gratte jusqu’au sang.’

Wit and image, for a similar conjunction of the two we should

have to go back, in English, to the seventeenth century. Jouhandeau picked up his thread from Renard, whose *Journal*, *Poil de Carotte* (1892), *l'Ecornifleur*, and *Histoires Naturelles* are still forward-looking books in the exploration of language and human behaviour. In Renard and to a lesser degree in Jouhandeau (*Elise* and *Chaminadour* are good examples), Flaubert's 'lyrical realism' has taken new and narrower paths.

The other side of Jouhandeau is the mystic, a martyred understanding and eloquence inherited from Léon Bloy. *M. Godeau Intime* shows this inspiration at its most powerful. Now, to anyone who had read Jouhandeau's sources (Renard and Bloy) without knowing Jouhandeau, the alliance of two such talents would seem sheer impossibility. It is as if, reviewing a new novel, I were to say that the author wrote like George Moore and Carlyle. In England such an event *would* be impossible. Few of our good writers leave doors open from which a successor can step out. 'Dead End' has been written over almost every achievement of the English genius from *Tristram Shandy* and *Paradise Lost*, to *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*. The continuities of the English tradition are nearly always social, climatic, physiological—anything but literary.

One result of this—when we compare the two traditions, English and French—is that on the whole the first is *amical* to genius, and the second to talent. Not that there aren't good minor English writers and great French ones, but the balance is the other way. The French tradition means that many lesser writers, who in England would be choked before they could take their first deep breath, discover and unroll a talent. Hence the paradox that French novelists, who owe so much to one another, are usually far more individual and original than their English equivalents. Julien Green and Jouhandeau could be paralleled, for example, with Walpole and Charles Morgan. To anyone who has read all four it may seem that there is no comparison, that the first pair are exciting to read, and the second aren't, and there it ends. But look a little closer. Julien Green has taken a step forward with almost every book he has written, Walpole nearly as inevitably has slid back. *Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill* was a very good first book; it was followed by others that could for a time be called promising, but have now lapsed into a Herries flim-flam of rosy affabilities and glamorous knighthood. Sir Hugh, in fact, is now a very good

public entertainer, while M. Green is a serious artist. Yet in possibility of talent the two, I should say, are not so far apart as they might seem. A preoccupation with horror is one point in common; Green has mastered and moulded his, Sir Hugh's remains little more than an eccentricity. I haven't the heart to set up Mr. Morgan against Jouhandeau. Perhaps it will be enough to say that even the self-deceptions in Jouhandeau (he is not free of them) are self-knowledge compared with anything in *Sparkenbroke* or *The Flashing Stream*. Yet I can see a tradition in which neither Morgan nor Walpole would have had to follow the loudest cheering.

Two truths about writing, I have suggested so far, the French set store by: (1) Self-knowledge is essential to a firm and varied art, and an insurance against bad; (2) Originality finds its soil where there is interpenetration of artist with artist, talent with talent. The equivalent English truths are: (1) Unless an artist writes for others, he goes mad; therefore, find your public, know them, and what you sacrifice in the way of truth you will gain in humanity; (2) Originality consists in writing and being a country gentleman, writing and working in an insurance office, in lying low among your associates and being read a thousand miles away or a hundred years hence.

There they are, side by side, two traditions. I prefer the first—and that, not merely because it is gone, because it offered consolations to those who have lived under the duress of the second. Its advantages, as I see them now, far outweigh, in a world run by astrologers on the instalment plan, any disadvantages. If the French tradition has resulted to-day in inbreeding, the English has reached the point of no breeding at all. Our writers are sharply divided into groups—the psychopaths and the con-men, high-brow and middlebrow, Forster closing up like a bivalve, Morgan preading his three-card trick in suburban sitting rooms. That clash, to be felt at any literary meeting or on any page where contemporary writing is discussed, seems to me imbecile and self-destructive. It represents, in the most excruciating form, a division that goes back further in English literature than one might think. In no other language do we find so often and poignantly stressed the artist's despair of his own achievement. 'My fruits are only flowers': Marvell was composed, equable in resignation. Birds build but not I build, no, but strain, Time's eunuch, and

not breed one word that wakes'. This is Hopkins. Between the two, anguish has sharpened, the lovely balanced singularity of the seventeenth century has become the warring, choking cage-death of the nineteenth; and what is true of Marvell and Hopkins, twin souls, is true also of Sterne and James Joyce, Jane Austen and Forster, Dryden and Eliot. The tradition in which older writers lived and could build has become the solitary confinement of their successors. And do not assume that in every case the former were more robust, firmer footed and on better terms with the world. An ability 'to take it' depends very largely on the society in which one has grown up.

The dislocation in so much contemporary English writing is seen clearly in the divorce between poetry and fiction. Imagination in the English novel has come to mean no more than inventive largesse, and anything in the nature of poetic imagination going with the creation of character and incident is as rare as swallows at Christmas. This seems to me the final mark against 'the English tradition', as it has turned out: it blunts genius, and it blasts the breath out of talent.

What would have happened to Green and Jouhandeau, novelists and true poets in their novels, if they had been born and lived on the hither side of the Channel? Probably they would not be worth reading, if they had written at all; Green might have turned out highbrow shockers. On the other hand, they would almost certainly be alive (as now perhaps they are not), preparing to live and write another day.

PETER QUENNEL

BYRON IN VENICE—II

HIS freedom of action and peace of spirit Byron was determined to safeguard. Claire had continued to write to him after the birth of Allegra; and her pleas, which he continued to leave unanswered—he could not forgive her for her initial shamelessness: there was still traces in his temperament of the Scottish puritan—were often accompanied by letters from Shelley. Something must be done about Allegra's future. And, whereas his intentions were generous, his plans were vague. On one point, however, he was extremely definite: and when his comfort seemed in danger he was often brutal. He would not permit Claire Clairmont to enter his life again. If she liked to give up the child, he would gladly adopt her. 'I shall acknowledge and breed her myself,' he had written to Kinnaid, 'giving her the name of Biron (to distinguish her from little Legitimacy). . . .' But there could be no place for Claire in any arrangement he made; and Shelley, assuming that curiously diplomatic style which he assumed when it became necessary to write to Byron, needed all his tact to prepare the way for a workable compromise. Claire, he admitted, was exacting and tiresome—he had himself suffered from her moodiness and fits of temper: but if Byron sought to violate a mother's claims, 'the opinion of the world might indeed be fixed on you, with such blame as your friends could not justify . . . wholly unlike those ridiculous and unfounded tales which . . . make your friends so many in England, at the expense of those who fabricated them'. At last, after some bickering and, on the part of Claire, much misery and anxious hesitation, it was decided that the child should be handed over to her father. The Shelleys were now legally man and wife, for they had been married with Godwin's blessing on 13th December, 1816; and during March, 1818, accompanied by Claire and Allegra and their own two children, they left England, reaching Milan on the 4th of April. Hence Allegra, under the charge of a Swiss nursemaid, Elise Foggi, was despatched on the 28th to join her father's household at the Palazzo Mocenigo. Byron admired the little girl's beauty and

liked her spirit. He was anxious that she should be provided for in a proper manner; but he was scarcely qualified to superintend her upbringing which devolved on her nurse and the Italian servants, with occasional help from Margharita Cogni, who was inclined to spoil her and upset her stomach by gifts of sweetmeats. But Mrs. Hoppner, the wife of the British consul, like Elise 'a Swissesse', pronounced by Shelley to be 'mild and beautiful, and unprejudiced in the best sense of the word', was there to keep an eye on the child's development and safeguard her against the more mischievous effects of her Italian background.

Wild stories of Byron's life in Italy had already been circulated. Much might be forgiven to an Englishman who was young and rich; but even in Venice he was considered a somewhat extravagant personage; and he himself had never been reluctant to improve a scandal. Otherwise what need to keep John Murray posted in the details of his love affairs and escapades? He knew that his letter would be handed around in Murray's parlour; and that literary gatherings at decorous Albemarle Street, in a setting of mahogany and damask and Turkey carpet, beneath the solemn classic busts that adorned the bookcase, would be stirred and enlivened by his account of some passing passion—the Carnival acquaintance, 'little Bacchante', whom he had an appointment to meet that evening at his milliner's or the peasant-girl he had picked up on his daily ride. In scandal as in everything else, he liked effrontery. But although his reputation, which by that time was beyond repair, suffered, perhaps, very little extra damage, and though the faculties of mind and imagination did not deteriorate, there were presently hints that his nerves were rattled and his health disordered. Solitude was beginning to make him touchy and petulant. True, he enjoyed the society of his social inferiors, but he missed his equals; and it infuriated him that his London friends, absorbed in their world of pleasure and politics—Kinnaird getting rid of his mistress, John Cam angling for election to Parliament—should be inattentive to his requests and unpunctual in the replies they sent to his letters. Might they not have guessed that he was sometimes lonely? The commissions he gave them were seldom executed; and, when he wrote for magnesia, hair-oil, tooth powder, the wrong articles were often procured or the books and medicaments he required were delayed in transit. Hobhouse, Kinnaird, Murray had all annoyed him. His lawyer,

John Hanson, nicknamed 'Spooney', had the impertinence to suggest that he should leave Venice and meet him half-way beside the Lake of Geneva merely to sign papers connected with the sale of Newstead. He would do nothing of the kind, he wrote to Hobhouse. Hanson must pack his bags and set out for Venice. He was unwell, he announced in April, and he could not move. The origins of his indisposition he did not specify. It depressed him, moreover, to learn of the death of Lady Melbourne.¹ The time had gone by when he 'could feel for the dead' . . . and such events left only 'a numbness worse than pain', comparable in terms of the body to the effect of a violent blow on the elbow; but he remembered and regretted her as 'the best, and kindest, and ablest female I ever knew—old or young'. For Byron her death meant the disappearance of yet another tie between himself and England. He valued friendship as he had never valued love—there were both elements in his passionate feeling for Augusta. And the loss of Lady Melbourne helped to increase that sense of solitude—of isolation, moral, physical and intellectual—which had been growing on him since he had said good-bye to Hobhouse and had given himself up to the bohemian pleasures of the Palazzo Mocenigo. The only English acquaintance he met regularly was Richard Hoppner; for the Consul had taken the place of Hobhouse as his companion in daily rides along the Lido, and Byron occasionally attended Mrs. Hoppner's evening parties. Then Shelley wrote, announcing that he would like to see him. This was during August, 1818. The rumours that Shelley had at first tactfully discounted were growing more and more persistent. They were accompanied by complaints from Allegra's nursemaid, who spoke of herself and her charge as lost in a wilderness of foreign servants, mostly Italian menservants of indifferent morals. Claire announced vehemently that she must see Allegra. It was obvious that, if she travelled to Venice unaccompanied, Byron would regard her visit as an attempt on his privacy; and Shelley, therefore, promised to act as escort. After an exhausting journey they arrived in a violent rainstorm; and, as they crouched in the damp shelter of the gondola's cabin with the rain thrashing down upon the roof and blurred lights sliding past them along dark canals, the talkative gondolier (who knew nothing of their destination) related long stories of the English

¹ Lady Melbourne died at Melbourne House, Whitehall, in April 1818.

nobleman who had made his home in Venice—a fantastically extravagant and eccentric personage whose luxuries and prodigalities were common knowledge. At the hotel, a waiter took up the story—evidently it was a popular one in Venice—adding further details for the edification of the English tourists. That morning, soon after breakfast, they visited the Consul. Mrs. Hoppner had immediately sent for the little girl, who looked pale and appeared to have ‘lost a good deal of her liveliness’, but, to Shelley’s eyes at least, was still extremely pretty. The account that the Hoppners gave of Byron ‘unfortunately corresponded too justly with most of what’ the travellers had already heard, ‘though doubtless (added Shelley) with some exaggeration. We discussed a long time the mode in which I had better proceed with him, and at length determined that Claire’s being there should be concealed, as Mr. Hoppner says he often expresses his extreme horror of her arrival, and the necessity it would impose on him of instantly quitting Venice.’

The same day, at three o’clock in the afternoon, followed Shelley’s cautious visit to the Palazzo Mocenigo. But Byron’s attitude had never been easy to forecast; and (as Shelley noted with surprise) ‘he was delighted to see me . . . and the anxiety he shows to satisfy us and Claire is very unexpected’. True, he was not anxious that Claire should take the child to Florence, ‘because the Venetians will think that he has grown tired of her and dismissed her; and he has already the reputation of caprice’. Besides, very naturally, it had occurred to him that, should Claire once regain Allegra, she would be unwilling to give her up, ‘and there will be a second renewal of affliction and a second parting’. However, he agreed to a week’s reunion, and added that, after all, he had no right over the child. ‘If Claire likes to take it, let her take it. I do not say what most people would in that situation, that I will refuse to provide for it, or abandon it . . . but she must surely be aware herself how very imprudent such a measure would be.’

In fact, the whole conversation passed off far more mildly than Shelley had anticipated; and, though he was anxious to rejoin Claire at Mrs. Hoppner’s, it was difficult (since Claire’s presence was yet unknown) to refuse to accompany Byron on his afternoon’s exercise. Very unwillingly, therefore, he entered the gondola and was rowed out ‘to a long, sandy island which

defends Venice from the Adriatic. When we disembarked, we found his horses waiting . . . and we rode along the sands of the sea.' Their talk (Shelley told Mary) 'consisted in histories of his wounded feelings, and questions of my affairs, and great professions of friendship and regard for me'. The impressions of that ride and of the splendid sunset that greeted them as they returned to Venice, with the distant Alps hovering upon the northern skyline and the Euganean Hills vaguely shadowed upon the west, formed the substance of *Julian and Maddalo*. Next morning rose 'rainy, cold and dim'. Shelley called at the Palazzo Mocenigo before Byron had finished dressing; and, while he waited, he played with Allegra in the deserted billiard room and amused her by trundling billiard balls across the floor. Then Byron entered, again affectionate, calm and equable. Shelley's conviction of his greatness was not revised. 'Count Maddalo (he was to write in a prose foreword to the somewhat lame verses he composed that autumn) is a person of the most consummate genius, and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country. But it is his weakness to be proud. . . . His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than those of other men; and, instead of the latter having been employed in curbing the former, they have mutually lent each other strength. . . . I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the concentrated and impatient feelings which consume him; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample, for in social life no human being can be more gentle, patient and unassuming. . . . His serious conversation is a sort of intoxication. . . . There is an inexpressible charm in his relation of his adventures in different countries.' If Byron encouraged Shelley's inclination towards hero-worship, Shelley in Byron would seem to have evoked a kind of coquetry. For Byron enjoyed shocking his friend but was delighted to please him. And, simultaneously, on his best and worst behaviour, he was now caustic, disparaging, and misanthropic, now benevolent, accommodating, the creature of generous impulses. Meanwhile, Shelley had spent further hours in Byron's company. And Byron (one imagines) now tired of charming, had exhibited other aspects of his personality and had been more prodigal of hints and confidences than his companion cared for. The intoxication of his conversation was at length an irritant.

Profound as was Shelley's reverence for Byron's poetic gift, he was disconcerted by the mood that informed *Childe Harold* and by the positive malevolence that he seemed to detect in its concluding canto. The spirit in which it was written (he remarked to Peacock) 'is, if insane, the most wicked and mischievous insanity that ever was given forth. It is a kind of obstinate and self-willed folly, in which he hardens himself.' He had remonstrated with the author (he added) but to very little purpose, 'on the tone of mind from which such a view of things alone arises. For its real root is very different from its apparent one.' The fact was that the Italian women among whom Byron spent his time were 'perhaps the most contemptible of all who exist under the moon—the most ignorant, the most disgusting, the most bigoted; Countesses smell so strongly of garlic, that an ordinary Englishman cannot approach them. Well, L. B. is familiar with the lowest sort of these women, the people his gondoliers pick up in the streets'. But there was worse to come—a suggestion that Byron may for a time have reverted to the habits and prepossessions of his Levantine period. Venice was a cosmopolitan, half-Eastern city; and, included in the list of his nefarious boon-companions, were 'wretches (observed Shelley with chill disdain) who seem almost to have lost the gait and physiognomy of man, and who do not scruple to avow practices, which are not only not named but, I believe, even conceived in England'. Byron's attitude appeared to be one of splenetic lassitude. 'He says he disapproves, but he endures. He is heartily and deeply discontented with himself; and contemplating in the distorted mirror of his own thoughts the nature and the habits of man, what can he behold but objects of contempt and despair?'

He did not doubt (Shelley concluded), and, indeed, for Byron's, sake he ought to hope, that 'his present career must end soon in some violent circumstance'. Yet so remarkable are the defensive powers of human nature, and so diverse the materials on which genius feeds, that there was no dramatic or scandalous finale to Byron's existence at the Palazzo Mocenigo. It seems to have been true, nevertheless, that he was disgusted and discontented. From dissipation he had toppled over into flat satiety; and, although he was convinced that he had said good-bye to England and was out of patience with the majority of his English friends—he could not forgive Hobhouse, he wrote, '(or anybody) the atrocity of their

late neglect and silence'—the present was still overshadowed by thoughts of his past life. Nervous exhaustion had begun to make him acutely sensitive. After many remonstrances and as many delays, his lawyer and his lawyer's son—'Spooney' and 'Young Spooney'—arrived in Venice with the Newstead papers on November 12th. Unfortunately, they had brought only one of the three large packages entrusted by Murray to their care; and the package Hanson happened to have selected contained not a single book but 'a few different-sized kaleidoscopes, tooth-brushes, tooth-powder, etc., etc.' Byron's indignation and disappointment were extreme. For some hours he would not be pacified. Then his gondola drew up at the steps of the hotel and, at seven o'clock in the evening, John and Charles Hanson were conducted to their employer's presence.

As in most Venetian residences of the more pretentious kind, the ground floor of the Palazzo Mocenigo was neither furnished nor inhabited. Damp, sea-smelling, obscure, it served as a repository for Byron's carriages, stranded there with raised shafts and tarnished armorial trimmings, and as a home for the various animals he had collected. To Mütz, the Swiss mastiff (who, ferocious as he appeared, was once put to flight by a pig during a drive through the Apennines), Byron had recently added a fox and a wolf, besides an heterogeneous assemblage of 'dogs, birds, monkeys. . . . As his lordship passed to his gondola, he used to stop and amuse himself with watching their antics, or would feed them himself occasionally.' It pleased him to live surrounded by dependent creatures: and to this trait, rather than to any genuine love of animals (though he had appreciated the companionship of several enormous and devoted dogs) may perhaps be attributed that weakness for forming menageries which added so much to the discomfort and confusion of his domestic background. Having threaded their way between coaches and animal-pens, father and son now ascended a massive marble staircase which gave access to the master's apartments on the *piano nobile*. They were ushered through a vast and empty billiard room, next through a bed-chamber; finally to the threshold of an inner room where Byron welcomed them. He seemed almost painfully nervous, Charles Hanson noticed. The lawyer belonged to his youth—to Newstead and Nottingham; he had been associated with the long-drawn crisis of 1816; and Byron, suddenly confronted by his staid and

prosaic figure, for some moments could not speak, while his eyes were tear-fogged. At length, with an effort, he was able to break the silence. 'Well, Hanson!' he brought out, 'I never thought you would have ventured so far. I rather expected you would have sent Charles.'

Other details of that first visit remain unrecorded. Much legal business was gone through; on 17th November Byron signed a new codicil to his will, which Fletcher witnessed. Then, learning from the Hansons that Mr. Townsend, who had accompanied them from England as the representative of Colonel Wildman, had been at Harrow, he sent his valet with an invitation to the Hôtel d'Angleterre. As soon as Townsend arrived, they moved to the billiard room; and during the two hours that the game lasted, Byron's spirits soared to the topmost level. 'His questions about Harrow and the Drurys were incessant'; and as he talked he perpetually bit his finger-nails, a nervous habit to which all his life he had been addicted. In other respects, the impression he made was singular. What the younger man had expected we do not know—what disdainful poetic apparition, compact of fashionable arrogance and literary elegance, with pure lofty brow and classic profile. If he remembered Byron distinctly, it was as young and slender. But twenty-four months of Venetian excesses and the Venetian climate had altered his physical entity as much as it had changed his moral being. Already, during the course of the previous year, he had written to inform his sister that he had 'got large, ruddy, and robustious to a degree which would please you—and shock me'; and since that time the inroads of middle age had grown more and more manifest. ' . . . He looked forty. His face had become pale, bloated, and sallow.' There could be no longer any doubt that he was decidedly corpulent. Whereas he had once been muscular, alert and upright, the outline of his shoulders was now heavy and stooping; and 'the knuckles of his hands were lost in fat'.¹ With his long, greying curls, his rings and brooches, the outmoded clothes he wore, he suggested less

¹'Of our poor dear B. I have received two letters within this last year: the last dated September. This is all I can tell you *from* him, and that he wrote (*as usual to me*) on the old subject very uncomfortably, and on his present pursuits, which are what one could dread and expect; a string of low attachments. Of him, I hear he looks *very well*, but *fat*, immensely large, and his hair long.'—Mrs. Leigh to Hodgson. Dec. 30th, 1818.

the eminent poet than the declining dandy—an expatriate of dubious propensities but distinguished origins, the somewhat spoiled and superannuated man of pleasure.

Yet there would have been no truth in any imputation of literary decadence. However his Venetian career had affected his health and spirits, it had not dulled the edge of his creative faculty or at all hindered the execution of his poetic plans. Though during the latter part of 1818 very often he is said to have been so disturbed by the confusion of his household that he would leave the palazzo and spend the night in his gondola out on the lagoon, and though the complication of his intrigues was labyrinthine, seldom had he been more busily occupied or to better purpose. Erratic hours and irregular methods had always suited him. He preferred to write when his imagination was inflamed, with the cumulative excitement of the day coursing through his system; and, since frequently he did not leave his bed till late in the afternoon and (like Brummell) passed several hours in bathing and dressing, after which he needed exercise and congenial company, he could rarely sit down to his writing table till night had descended. Then he wrote rapidly, feverishly, with few erasures. During recent months he had given much thought to the condition of poetry and, in solitude, had formed a definite scheme of his tastes and prejudices. The moderns he abhorred, though an exception was made for Crabbe and his old acquaintance, the banking poetaster, Samuel Rogers; but 'I am convinced, the more I think of it (he had written to Murray) that . . . *all* of us—Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, Moore, Campbell, I—are . . . in the wrong, one as much as another; that we are upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system, or systems, not worth a damn in itself, and from which none but Rogers and Crabbe are free; and that the present and next generations will finally be of this opinion. I am the more confirmed in this by having lately gone over some of our classics, particularly Pope. . . . I took Moore's poems and my own and some others, and went over them side by side with Pope's, and I was really astonished . . . and mortified at the ineffable distance in point of sense, harmony, effect, and even *Imagination*, passion and *Invention*, between the little Queen Anne's man, and us of the Lower Empire. Depend upon it, it is all Horace then, and

Claudian now . . . and if I had to begin again, I would model myself accordingly'.

'Crabbe's the man (he continued), but he has got a coarse and impracticable subject, and Rogers, the grandfather of living Poetry, is retired upon half pay. . . . ' Odd as it may strike the contemporary reader that the weak, finicking elegance of Roger's verses and the bareness and grimness of Crabbe's rustic narrative (from which occasional beauties spring like flowers of heath or foreshore, struggling with effort through a harsh and sandy soil) should be thus admired by the more exuberant and fertile poet, there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Byron's criticism. His own influence in modern literature he had always deprecated. If not ashamed of *Childe Harold*, he was certainly tired of him—tired of the imitation and uncomprehending adulation which the antics of that prodigious personage still aroused: and he had determined that his new poem should reflect a completely different mood—one far closer to the spirit of his Venetian holiday. Naturally, since he was above all things a creature of paradox and since, both in questions of poetry and the problems of personal life, instinct proved invariably stronger than considered judgement, the work as it took shape was by no means classical and had little in common with the concision and correctitude of the English Augustan poets. On the contrary, its scheme was loose and its detail slipshod. As before, the quality that redeemed the work was an abounding gusto.

Few poems seem to have been produced with more enjoyment than the first and second cantos of *Don Juan*. *Beppo*, written soon after his arrival in Venice, a dashing verse anecdote of ninety-nine stanzas, was a *ballon d'essai* for the longer poem; and, having grown accustomed to a divagatory expansive strain and abandoned his original idea of attempting a prose story, he set about the creation of a non-romantic hero. At last, he would be as honest in literature as the conventions allowed him. Into the character of *Don Juan* he would pour all his own youthful experience—as much of it, at any rate, as he could convey with propriety—and the considered cynical judgement of his adult years. The tone was to be lightly astringent, mildly scathing—like youth itself, buoyant and yet bitter, carelessly cheerful and pessimistic in the same degree. It was meant (he wrote to his publisher on 19th September, 1818, announcing the completion of Canto I) 'to be

a little quietly facetious upon everything'. He doubted whether it was not 'too free' for his modest public, who would tolerate libertinism only if it were sentimental. 'However, I shall try the experiment anonymously; and if it don't take, it will be discontinued.'

Don Juan is the product of a completely adult mind. It is the most mature of all Byron's poems; for, notwithstanding the irregularity or redundancy of some passages, the vulgarity of others, it gives the impression of a writer who has at length arrived at that balance which every writer aims at—between the style he handles and the subject he deals with, between the world on the one hand and himself on the other, between the inward and the outward view, the claims of observation and the charms of introspection. To credit the poem with a morality or 'message' would be, of course, absurd. Few works are more amoral in intention or attitude. But beneath the advocacy of feeling for feeling's sake, of sensation as an end in itself or an escape from world-despair—

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;
The best of life is but intoxication:
Glory, the grape, love, gold, in these are sunk
The hopes of all men, and of every nation;
Without their sap, how branchless were the trunk
Of life's strange tree, so fruitful on occasion!

—runs a fatalism not to be confused with pagan stoicism, but which owed something perhaps to the influence of Byron's Calvinist childhood. Caught in the weary cycle of emotional cause-and-effect (to which he is condemned by his 'terrible gift of intimacy', the fatal domination that he exerts over the feelings of others) *Don Juan* must take the consequence of the emotions he rouses. Both the pleasure he gives and the pain he inflicts demand atonement. Both will recoil upon him through the ineluctable workings of fate. Retribution is implicit in every conquest of happiness:

Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour
Was that in which the heart is always full,
And, having o'er itself no further power,

Prompts deeds eternity cannot annul,
But pays off moments in an endless shower
Of hell-fire—all prepared for people giving
Pleasure or pain to one another living.

It is the troubled background from which the point of view of the poem emerges, together with the original conception of the work itself—a modern epic poem purposely stripped of all heroic trappings—that makes *Don Juan* one of the great typical achievements of the European nineteenth century. In some respects it anticipates the modern novel. Here (notwithstanding the author's preferences) is no attempt at symmetry or pretension to dignity. Far from wishing to attune his mind to the height of literature, the poet scales down literature to suit experience, and confers on his literary form the idiosyncrasies of his heart and temperament. An Augustan poet could address a society that shared his standards. Byron was consciously at variance with the world he spoke to; and that world, already profoundly disordered and deeply divided, still suffering from the aftermath of 1789 and from the disillusionment that had followed Napoleon's downfall, showed little cohesion either in the sphere of art or in the field of politics. Such a society invites attack by the creative writer (who suffers among his contemporaries and resents the state of critical solitude in which he is obliged to exist); and *Don Juan* is deliberately provocative from start to finish. The product of an often angry but only half-embittered man, sufficiently close to the experiences of his own youth to remember its ardours, but advanced far enough in middle age to have begun to acquire detachment, the poem was likely to puzzle the young as much as it annoyed the old. For the writer treated of youth with sympathy yet in the spirit of levity: and of age and its moral judgements with youthful cynicism.

The greatest works of literature are independent of the conditions among which they were conceived: it is as an afterthought that we inquire into the facts of their genesis. To *Don Juan*, on the other hand, our response is personal; and, as we read, we are reminded at once of the Palazzo Mocenigo and of the studious nights, following idle and self-indulgent days, when Byron, usually fortified by gin-and-water, would sit up over his manuscript till dawn had broken. He seems to *talk* in verse, with

the same flashes of eloquence and explosions of wit, the same light-hearted digressions and irregular expansive flow (now rising to the level of poetry, now declining to facetiousness) that we might have expected had we been listening to his conversation, though his actual conversation, according to most accounts, was far less brilliant. A vast number of topics are briefly covered—from the inevitable injustice of a woman's lot to a passage of expert advice concerning the treatment of hangovers. But most characteristic of all and, indeed, most moving since it reflects alike the gaiety and the despair of the writer's mood, is the detached stanza found scribbled on the back of Canto I:

I would to heaven that I were so much clay,
As I am blood, bone, marrow, passion, feeling—
Because at least the past were pass'd away—
And for the future—(but I write this reeling,
Having got drunk exceedingly to-day,
So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling)
I say—the future is a serious matter—
And so—for God's sake—hock and soda-water!

Byron hoped that *Don Juan* would irk his enemies: he had expected that it would be the cause of some consternation among members of his enthusiastic and gullible public: he had not imagined that it would plunge his supporters into alarm and perplexity. Yet such was the effect of its appearance at Albemarle Street. During December he was amazed to learn that Hobhouse, Kinnaird, Scrope Davies, Moore—all the friends whom John Murray had consulted—were 'unanimous in advising its suppression'. Many objections were alleged by these prudent men of the world—'the inexpediency of renewing his domestic troubles by sarcasms upon his wife . . . the indecency of parts . . . the attacks on religion . . . the abuse of other writers . . .' No doubt their advice was well meant; it was none the less infuriating. To Hobhouse and Kinnaird jointly, he wrote back that, although the stanzas on Castlereagh might be omitted (since he was not in England to face the Minister's challenge personally) he would have no 'cutting and slashing' of the body of the poem. If the composition had poetical merit, then it would stand; but he declined to give way to 'all the cant of Christendom. I have been

cloyed with applause, and sickened with abuse; at present I care for little but the copyright; I have imbibed a great love of money, let me have it; if Murray loses this time, he won't the next. . . . But in no case will I submit to have the poem mutilated.'

At last, on Hobhouse's insistence, he decided—a decision soon afterwards revoked¹—that *Don Juan* should be printed in an edition of fifty copies for private circulation only. The whole affair left him considerably vexed and ruffled. It was yet another proof of the slackness and cowardice of his English friends; it helped to exaggerate the condition of nervous irritability—of fidgetiness and sensitiveness, combined with spleen and lassitude—into which for the last twelve months he had been slowly sinking. This year the south wind and the Carnival arrived together. Again, as during 1817 and 1818, he devoted whole nights to the pursuit of pleasure, and wrote to Murray 'in a passion and a Sirocco' having stayed up till six o'clock among Carnival gaieties. By the end of January, his health was causing him serious trouble. It was his stomach, he supposed, or perhaps his liver. At least, he was unable 'to eat of anything with relish but a kind of Adriatic fish called *Scampi*, which happens to be the most indigestible of marine viands'. Plainly, the time had come when he must reform his mode of existence: to the warnings sounded by his own constitution—which threatened complete collapse or premature decrepitude—was added the headshaking of his Venetian doctors. As a preliminary measure, they recommended that he should purge his household—advice that Byron accepted with uncommon mildness. There ensued a general exodus of his more outrageous favourites; and comparative quiet settled down upon the inner apartments of the Palazzo Mocenigo.

The Fornarina, however—expelled about this period, partly no doubt because the physical demands she made upon him grew more and more exhausting, partly because (as he told Murray) she had recently become 'quite ungovernable' and other members of his household complained of her conduct—did not take her departure till she had put up a struggle. He had told her quietly and firmly that she must leave the palazzo—'she had acquired a sufficient provision for herself and mother, etc., in my service'—and she had gone, 'threatening knives and revenge'. Next day, in

¹ 'Tell Hobhouse that *Don Juan* must be published—the loss of the copyright would break my heart.'—*Byron to Kinnaird*, Feb. 22nd, 1819.

she stalked again with her usual effrontery, 'having broke open a glass door that led from the hall below to the staircase, by way of prologue'. Byron was at dinner; she snatched a knife from his hand, 'cutting me slightly in the thumb in the operation', but was disarmed by the valet and led down to a gondola, whence she immediately plunged head over heels into the Grand Canal. Byron, again disturbed at the dinner-table, to see her carried limp and dripping up the marble stairs, superintended her resuscitation with a calm efficiency that was bred of long experience—he was no great believer in feminine suicides. His terrified servants urged him to apply for police-protection—'they had always been frightened at her, and were now paralysed . . .'; but he laughed at their apprehensions and refused their pleas. 'I had her sent home quietly after her recovery, and never saw her since, except twice at the opera, at a distance amongst the audience. She made many attempts to return, but no more violent ones.'

With the expulsion of the Fornarina and the reformation of life at the Palazzo Mocenigo closes a whole period of Byron's development. It had marked the decisive pause between youth and middle age, when—accompanied very often by an abrupt recrudescence of physical energy—there occurs a final precipitation of tastes and talents (crystallized at length in their adult form), and a writer looks around and begins to know himself. To youth the spectacle of its own enormities is always fascinating. Middle age, though a sensitive mind may never lose its capacity for admiration, in the end forgoes its tendency to feel surprise. Not that Byron, even at this stage, had achieved self-knowledge, but he was glad now to leave his temperament the enigma he found it, and no longer harboured romantic delusions as to the enigma's import. Unluckily, such discoveries are largely negative. There remained the problem how he should dispose of the years that remained to him—whether in authorship (a calling that he still somewhat despised: he had always considered it a poor substitute for the life of action) or in action. But what action could he nowadays contemplate—a luxurious exile, the helpless victim of his own celebrity, his every movement watched and noted by the Austrian secret police, who gladly condoned his vices but would certainly not excuse any pretensions to heroic virtue. Besides, he was by temperament an exceedingly slothful person. He loved his comfort: he was becoming infected with the love of money.

During his adult life Byron had confronted many complex problems. Almost without exception, the outlet that he discovered was amatory or sentimental. In love he found a refuge from the pains of life, and in the experience of making love a shadowy substitute for some other more satisfying, more substantial experience—as to its precise nature he had never been definite. Once again, he had notions of settling down. He was eminently suited, at least in his own opinion, to the domestic state and asked little enough of the women he lived with—merely that they should laugh with him and make him laugh, keep clear of him in his dark moods and respect his privacy. It was too late, he was afraid, for an exuberant youthful passion—

No more—no more—Oh! never more on me
The freshness of the heart can fall like dew . . .

—but there was still time, and he had still the energy, to form a new attachment in which he could stabilize the vagrant emotions of the last few years and give his heart and his senses the rest they needed. The Carnival had gone by; the agitating south wind had dropped when the spring came. Sobriety had improved his health. But recovered health (as not infrequently happens in such a case as Byron's) brought with it a hollow feeling of anti-climax.

[These two articles, the first appearing in the December issue, on Byron in Venice are abridged from a book which Messrs. Collins will publish shortly.]

SELECTED NOTICES

MR. AUDEN'S new volume of poems¹ is not an *œuvre de la jeunesse*. For the first time those who have hoped for something more than promise from Mr. Auden's talent will not be disappointed. At least one poem in this latest collection—a love poem, beginning 'Lay your sleeping head, my love, Human on my faithless arm'—is quite perfect. Not alone by reason of its quality, but also because it is written in the mood of a generation, this poem, at least, is likely to take its place among the love-poems of Shelley, Donne, and the rest. It is not, however, for one or two poems, but for his versatility, his mercurial cleverness, ranging from the serious and sublime to the shoddiest clap-trap, that Mr. Auden's poems deserve to be read as a true literary expression of our time.

There will be many—the present writer is one—who do not like either the matter or the style—styles, rather—of Mr. Auden's poems. That, however, does not invalidate the sad and vulgar truth of his picture. We may be reluctant to admit, but we cannot deny, that this derelict landscape, peopled by *petits gens* of poor physique and timid intelligence, unredeemed by any religion or morality to command respect, is England as we live in it. If Mr. Auden's poems were the mere 'sounding brass and tinkling cymbal' of accuracy, we might shut our eyes, but his problem is one which we need also to solve—that of finding a possible way to 'love thy crooked neighbour with thy crooked heart'.

Mr. Auden's charity, one might say, is a crooked charity—a love that no longer embraces the world (as during Christendom, if it did so then), but takes a last stand in the embrace of two lovers trying desperately to shut out the knowledge that their Tahiti stands on a sinking Atlantis—of Christendom or the Middle Class, what you will.

There has been some weeding out of discarded attitudes, or problems solved, in this latest volume. Those who, ten years ago, were welcoming Mr. Auden as the leader of a *Trahison des élèves*, of schoolboys against their masters, of the heirs against the rule of the dead, will find their leader wavering. He seldom uses the imperative—so characteristic of the earlier poems, and so irritating

¹ *Another Time* (Faber & Faber—6s.)

to those who saw no reason to accept his authority or command. The author of that bad fizzy work, 'The Orators', and of the clever but irresponsible 'Dog Beneath the Skin', writes now for grown men. Perhaps the 'Ascent of F 6' was a turning point—having led his expedition of schoolboys to the top of the hill, and there left them to perish, Mr. Auden speaks no longer of 'we'. With greater humility, and correspondingly greater force, he uses the private singular voice of one poet addressing no particular group:

All I have is a voice
 To undo the folded lie,
 The romantic lie in the brain
 Of the sensual man in the street
 And the lie of Authority
 Whose buildings grope the sky:
 There is no such thing as the State
 And no one exists alone;
 Hunger allows no choice
 To the citizen or the police;
 We must love one another or die.

This is no longer the voice of the leader of the school gang 'waiting for the end, boys, waiting for the end', at whom Mr. Empson had his 'smack'.

Mr. Auden is still, in one respect, the extravert. Though his solution may be a private solution, his problems are social problems. The majority of the poems in the present volume still deal with questions of human ecology, such questions as he posed himself in 'Look, Stranger':

I give
 The children at the open swimming pool
 Lithe in their first and little beauty
 A closer look;
 Follow the cramped clerk crooked at his desk,
 The guide in shorts pursuing flowers
 In their careers;
 A digit of the crowd, would like to know
 Them better whom the shops and trams are full of.

These are the problems that have led another poet, Charles Madge, from poetry into sociology. Mr. Auden has, like the originator of Mass-Observation, a genuine love of the misshapen bodies and minds of the crowd; whose loves are not, nor ever could be, the loves of Arcadia, but are love notwithstanding. It is no mere need to square the poetic conscience that compels poets, not undesirous of 'the entirely beautiful', to make an assault on the largely unbeautiful. Mr. Auden's love of humanity is, partly, the dramatist's love of, and inquisitiveness about, differences, and types, and idiom. But most of all, it is through his landscape that he understands the man who inhabits it.

The derelict Pennine landscape of 'Paid on Both Sides', and the city of 'Look, Stranger'—

With the byres of poverty down to
The river's edge, the cathedral, the engines, the dogs;
Here is the cosmopolitan cooking,
And the light alloys and the glass—

are so familiar that Mr. Auden's talent for describing them may be overlooked. More striking—for it has a prophetic element—is the picture he draws of a totalitarian world, in which the Devil commands the Fifth Column, and clergymen and country folk are the enemy in disguise—precisely like the parachute troops that dropped from German planes into Holland and Belgium. Mr. Auden's picture of Total War is uncannily like Hitler's real war. Here is the Devil—

Like influenza he walks abroad,
He stands by the bridge, he waits by the ford,
As a goose or a gull he flies overhead,
He hides in the cupboard, and under the bed.

Assuming such shapes as may best disguise
The hate that burns in his big blue eyes;
He may be a baby that croons in its pram,
Or a dear old grannie boarding a tram.

A plumber, a doctor, for he has skill
To adopt a serious profession at will.

Mr. Auden certainly knows his world.

In his human botanizing, Mr. Auden does not omit to scrutinize his peers. Two poems—on Freud and on Yeats—are boring and reverential. There is force in his scathing of A. E. Housman, but on Edward Lear, Rimbaud, Voltaire, he is superficial. An obscure poem on Pascal does not inspire the reader with any wish to decipher it. All these poems are polite. But a vein of snobbery emerges when Mr. Auden writes of the Miss Gees, the Victors, the Unknown Citizen. At the little people Mr. Auden sniggers behind his hand to us, the sharers of his private joke. He monomarks the Unknown Citizen. For writing about Miss Gee he adopts a disrespectful jingling metre, that he would not adopt, one is tempted to say, for a Housman or a Pascal.

But perhaps it is not so much at the Miss Gees, as at himself, that Mr. Auden sniggers so uncharitably. He has written few poems from which a deep-seated duality of attitude is altogether absent. He is the serious preacher and the sniggering choir-boy at one and the same time. Perhaps it is some sense of social guilt that makes him deny, as he advances them, the consolations of beauty or love. Or perhaps as a safeguard against their being taken away from him, he rejects them in advance. Cynicism is always cowardly. Before he dares to write the deeply-felt lines in 'Funeral Blues'—

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week, and my Sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last for ever,
I was wrong!

he must first show that he is tough, and can take it by dragging the sordid—that he *can* forget, but *must* not—(whence the must?)

Stops all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from howling with a juicy bone
and so on.

He may urge that in writing in a set form—such as Blues, or the Ballad, that conventions are forced upon him. One feels, rather, that Mr. Auden's vulgarity lies in his adopting the style—

it is mimicry or parody, and in any case, running away. The American originals that he imitates—'Frankie and Johnnie' and the rest—are not vulgar.

But for all the vulgarity and trashiness into which he so easily falls, Mr. Auden has made some effort to understand, and when he does commit himself to a positive statement—'We must love one another, or die'—he speaks sincerely, and in his own voice, for all his *dramatis personæ*—Housman, Miss Gee, and the love-sick cabaret-girl.

When Mr. Auden comes to defining love, we are again disappointed. His love is sexual love, and of a far more restricted order than Freud's libido. And yet, in this cynical and unconvinced generation, even this narrow faith provides some positive hope. At least, it is democratic, it is for the human and the faithless, for the

'Lurcher-loving collier black as night

to

Learn what love alone can teach,
Happy on a tousled bed.

But this love is defeatist, escapist:

Certainty, fidelity, on the stroke of midnight pass,

and

In the burrows of the Nightmare
Where Justice naked is
Time watches from the shadow
And coughs when you would kiss.

Time and Love are in antithesis—and both Time and Love Mr. Auden has ever before him. His love is not, like Christian love, or any other love of God, stronger than death, and 'the vision Venus sends

To lovers as they lie upon
Her tolerant enchanted slopes'

is a passive blessing, but not a motive of action, that will lead men to practise virtue alone with no reward in view, and to die still human; as for those to whom sexual love is unattainable—perhaps

the majority of mankind, Mr. Auden appears to think them as good as dead already. Which is absurd. Or, if true, better unsaid, or got round in some way, since the need to survive is imperative.

It is true that at moments Mr. Auden admits that the soul, even in love, is alone—

Nowhere else could I have known,
Than, beloved, in your eyes
What we have to learn,
That we love ourselves alone.

It is also true that he knows what social problems await solution. To suggest that Venus could solve them would be to be a crank and Mr. Auden is too true a poet to lie.

The windiest militant trash
Is not so crude as our wish:
What mad Nijinski wrote
About Diaghilev
Is true of the normal heart;
For the error bred in the bone
Of each woman and each man
Craves what it cannot have,
Not universal love,
But to be loved alone.

The question remains what it always was, and God is now, as ever, love. But will love, as Mr. Auden sees it, solve the problems of Mr. Auden's world? Perhaps we all, superstitiously misreading Freud, do pin our hopes to sexual love. If Mr. Auden cares more that individuals should be satisfied than that they should think, feel, and act justly, he will find this passive and immoral faith heartbreaking in the end, because it does not take into account the real state of affairs.

K. J. RAINE

Artistic Theory in Italy, by Anthony Blunt. Oxford Press. 7s. 6d. This able book is an introduction to æsthetic thought in Italy between 1436 and 1600. It is designed principally for the student, and the student, remembering that no English textbook has hitherto existed on the subject, will feel real gratitude to Mr. Blunt for the pains he has evidently taken in preparing it. His volume, indeed, is all that a textbook should be; it mentions a great many names (when future examinees are asked to distinguish between Alberti, Albertini and Albertinelli, they will be in a position to do so), it reduces ideas which are often of a complex kind to comparatively simple terms, and it packs a good deal of information into a very small space. In face of all this, it may appear ungenerous to criticise the angle from which Mr. Blunt approaches his material, and if I do so it is not because I am unaware that it is easier to criticise books about the Renaissance than to write them.

My main difficulty is that Mr. Blunt is evidently more interested in theory than the Renaissance theorists were. Alberti, to whom his first chapter is devoted, puts forward certain fundamental principles—the view that art should derive its sanction from popular opinion, that its basis was the imitation of nature, and that it thus required qualities known as ‘rilievo’ (which Mr. Blunt, I do not know why, connects principally with Leonardo) and ‘gratia’ (of which we find no mention until the chapter on Vasari). What did Alberti mean when he used such terms? Mr. Blunt supposes that he meant what he said. I cannot agree; for so practical is the purpose and so concrete the implication of Alberti’s written work that I do not think any analysis of the letter of his text can by itself provide an adequate explanation of his terminology. ‘In the early treatise on painting,’ writes Mr. Blunt of Alberti’s use of the word ‘nature’, ‘he generally seems to mean by it simply the sum of all the material objects not made by man. In the later works on sculpture he seems to assume the vaguely Aristotelean view discussed above.’ No one surely would have been more bewildered at these sentences than Alberti, and I can imagine him exclaiming (as he exclaimed when he feared his own thought was becoming woolly) ‘Lasciamo da parte quella disputa filosofica.’ The truth (as Mr. Blunt himself at one point suggests) is that Alberti summed up in a literary form the views of contemporary artists. When, therefore, I am told that ‘in certain contexts he defines painting in terms of an absolutely unqualified

naturalism', that he identifies 'the beautiful with the typical in nature,' that 'in relation to the Neoplatonists of the later Quattrocento the feature which stands out most is the complete absence of the idea of imagination in his writings', I feel a sense of frustration because I cannot connect any of these statements with the painting of Alberti's day. Unqualified naturalism in a man writing eleven years after the death of Lorenzo Monaco? Identification of the beautiful with the typical in nature in Domenico Veneziano? Absence of some concept of imagination in Filippo Lippi? Obviously there is something wrong. That something (and it applies also to Mr. Blunt's passages on Leonardo and Vasari, but not to his excellent chapter on Michelangelo) is that he has made insufficient effort to check the validity of his interpretation of the texts he deals with against the works of art by which they are exemplified.

My second difficulty is that Mr. Blunt tends to stress points which do not seem to me nearly as important as he thinks them. I cannot believe that Leonardo's and Equicola's discussions on the liberal and mechanical arts, for instance, were much more than cinquecento Aldous Huxley, and I know that Savonarola would never have insisted that images likely to arouse derision should be removed from churches had he supposed that in the twentieth century he would be held to have revealed æsthetic sensibility in doing so. In Mr. Blunt's case these errors of emphasis are aggravated by preconceptions nourished on milk-and-water Marx. Nothing can deaden the historical imagination more surely than that comparatively modern phenomenon a social conscience, and Mr. Blunt will not take it amiss if I say that the relation between his book, which has obviously been written with that handicap, and Schlosser's great *Kunstliteratur*, which was written without it, is sometimes that of the Natural History Museum and the Zoo.

The story of æsthetic thought during the Renaissance is that of progress between two intellectually authoritarian periods. Seen in such terms, it has to-day a truly horrifying actuality. A steady divagation from the rational, with moments of reaction and nostalgia in which a Bocchi could describe the *Eccellenza della Statua di San Giorgio di Donatello* and Binyon publish books on Botticelli illustrated by Sir Muirhead Bone, a phase of mannerism coloured by propaganda when anti-Huguenot frescoes are commissioned from Vasari and controversy rages in the *Listener*

about Picasso's *Guernica*, where do these lead? As the exponents of a new Counter-Reformation drop bombs on us each night, Mr. Blunt's book provides as clear an answer as we can wish to have. To people who are interested in painting, the out-of-date thing about a man like Roger Fry is not so much his point of view as the fact that he had a point of view at all. Theory, we reflect, as we turn Mr. Blunt's pages, how boring it is! And I suspect that so soon as some bill or bull ordains that we must do so, we in our turn will be more than content to let it alone.

JOHN POPE-HENNESSY

Homage to Hymen; An Anthology for the Affianced and Married. Faber & Faber. 8s. 6d.

The two facts of life which are unendurable to face are that in any real disaster we are alone, and that when we are dead we are finished, and perhaps no part of us or anything we have created is left. Escaping from these two black rocks pours the deepest human longing, to couple up with someone, usually of the opposite sex, for life. (There are some who refuse 'for life': they are usually the people who are most afraid of dying, and do not like the implication that at the end of a lifetime there is death.) Civilized societies build a wall round the couple in the form of a wedding ring, but, unfortunately, imprisoned in this circle are many other secondary human passions, physical desire for more than one person, vanity, dissatisfaction with inevitable missing qualities in the other, the need for as much love and admiration as possible. Each one of these feelings which is allowed to push down a piece of the wall and go its own way leaves a hole through which the bacteria of unhappiness crawl and slide. Most people are incapable of realizing that, to have one thing they want, others have to be given up; they grope for anything they can find, and a profoundly happy marriage is as rare as a wise person.

Homage to Hymen is made by Mr. Yaffe, who believes in marriage. He does not say this in his preface, and there are many extracts showing the boredom, claws and snarls awaiting one in the cage, but the impression left is that love, marriage and having children bring more happiness to the majority than any other way of life. He has divided the book into sections, beginning with falling in love, he follows the tide through the bedroom, showing

passion in some beds and quarrelling voices in others, up and down past jealousy, infidelity, bearing children, and ending on the quiet desert of old age, where, to lose one's husband or wife means that one is left alone for the last time. It is interesting that in the first section, among the many charming poems and descriptions of love and lust, there is nothing simple or spontaneous by a modern Englishman. 'In England', a Frenchman once said, 'every part of the body between the neck and the knees is called the stomach.' This exaggeration is true of all serious subjects in England, where so often the mention of sex, beauty or science, brings rigid eyelids and pink sausage faces swelling with distaste and embarrassment. There is, however, the calm judgement of Bertrand Russell, 'Those who have never known the deep intimacy and the intense companionship of happy mutual love have missed the best thing that life has to give; unconsciously, if not consciously, they feel this, and the resulting disappointment inclines them towards envy, oppression and cruelty.' If you do not agree with him there is Montaigne, who says that love is only 'a tickling delight of emptying one's seminary vessels', or John Fletcher:

'Tell me, dearest, what is love:
'Tis a lightning from above;
'Tis an arrow, 'tis a fire,
'Tis a boy they call Desire.
'Tis a grave,
Gapes to have
Those poor fools that long to prove.'

There is also every point of view on the pleasures and reasons for marrying and much advice on how men should choose their wives, and how the wives can best struggle to keep their husbands; but, owing to the comparative rareness of women's writing, little advice on what a husband should do to keep his wife. One of the most moving accounts of married life after ten years is given by Pepys. How he is jealous of his wife being leered at in church by an acquaintance and plans sending her to the country, how he himself flirts with two women and his wife scolds him so much that he goes to bed in a rage, but how, after half an hour 'she comes up mighty sicke with a fit of the cholique and in mighty

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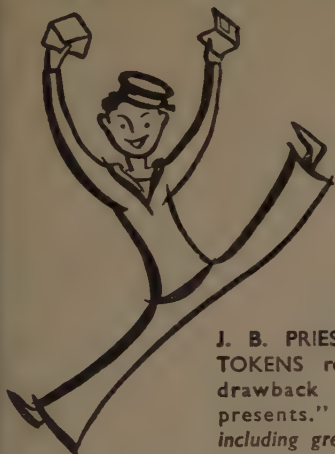
pain and calls for me out of the bed. I rose and held her; she prays me to forgive her, and in mighty pain we put her to bed, where the pain ceased by and by; and so we had some asparagus to our bedside for supper and very kindly afterward to sleepe and good friends in the morning.'

The only incomplete section of the book is the one about children. It is not too short, there are many descriptions of parental emotion, but they are all about small children, and there is nothing about the cliff-edge that is reached when the sons and daughters are grown up. It is the tragedy of creating a picture you are never allowed to finish, and which is snatched away from your walls after years of care and hard work, and which, for the rest of your life, you see in other people's houses with new jeering colours overlaying your background, and other brushes' flamboyant strokes obliterating yours, and which, as a creator, you cannot like because they are not your own. 'Marriage is essentially rather to be termed a tragic condition than a happy condition', says Count Keyserling; if this is sometimes true of marriage, it is always true of parenthood.

In every normal husband or wife comes the moment when they long to re-experience the exciting moments of falling in love and the gambling desire that can only be felt for someone who is unfamiliar, and by normal I do not mean the withered empty walnut shell which is nowadays called normality. It is a problem which is easy to be wise about until you have stared at a new face and felt the desire to bask under a different sun, but there is no doubt that in a happy marriage infidelity of any deepness brings ultimate misery, and of a sharper, more final degree than the misery brought by boredom or repression. Knotted into the slippery wood of infidelity are the yellow whorls of jealousy. Of all intense emotions jealousy is the most purposeless, fulfilling no necessity of nature, and yet beating away in the hearts of animals and humans, making them die a thousand deaths where they need never die at all. Falling in love is dependent on illusion, but at least the illusion brings pleasure and excitement, whereas in jealousy the reality is just as commonplace, but the illusion mangles and screws our eyes.

But some marriages succeed; they are together in completeness, creativeness and happiness: the inside of their wall is filled, and

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when one of the couple dies the fluid leaks away, leaving the other cold and finished.

‘He first deceased; she for a little tried
To live without him, liked it not, and died.’

DIANA WITHERBY

Jules Verne, by Kenneth Allott. The Cresset Press. 15s.

The nineteenth century in France still has a unique power of putting the English intellectual off his stride. Like midnight reproaches, the dandies, professors, drunks, solitaries, bearded haters of the bourgeois, confront the six-bob verse from Faber's and the half-guinea childhood from the Hogarth Press. Writing so much, and so irritatingly well, they are always a pretext for self-doubt, as if, watched from our own aquarium, the intervening Channel had refracted their humanity into hostile and often slightly disgraceful presences. When they are frankly successful, and low-brow, like Jules Verne, their challenge is even more disturbing. Verne had the kind of talent which, from Defoe to Wells, we assume to be especially our own. Without the shady glamour of opium, or the emancipation of a private coterie, without so much as a romantic dash of Creole blood, he trespasses on our own province: that of the middle-class, imaginative, unfashionable, permanent best-seller.

The best way of exorcising him is to prove him something else. Mr. Allott, therefore, has tried to fit him into the background of his century as a representative figure. He avoids the blunt fact of Jules Verne, and substitutes the working-model of a nineteenth-century thinker and writer, disengaged from the influences of a new scientific society and the residue of a romanticism wearing thin.

The trouble is that Jules Verne is not a sufficiently interesting character. He cannot be expanded into the rôle given him, so that the real substance of the book is thrown back on his century. And with this Mr. Allott, though I take it he has French blood in his veins, is not so well fitted to deal. He cannot get rid of his own notebooks. You can hear a busy pencil working in the bit about Proudhon and the bit about the first coal-tar dye. This is a pity, because a good deal in his notebooks is fascinating; and fascination is not a quality apparent in Verne himself. Either he should be the

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PHILOSOPHIC ABSTRACTS

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subject of a serious study, for which Mr. Allott's tendency to snap-judgements ('Eugenie de Montijo y Teba, the sentimental, coldly charitable and pietistic Spaniard') does not fit him; or he should be written round by a connoisseur of the fantastic, Jean Cocteau, say, or Sacheverell Sitwell. Treated as 'an honest and objective writer whose very weaknesses indicate the standpoint and mental structure of his period' he does not come to life; nor can he be made to integrate the tendencies of his world without forcing the argument to absurdity.

For the point, surely, about Jules Verne is simply that he was a wonderfully competent writing-machine with a splendid fecundity of imagination. Beyond that, no appeal, however eloquent, to contemporary thought can make him other than what Mr. Allott himself calls him, 'a studious middle-class provincial', whose early rebellion was to risk his father's anger by becoming a stockbroker.

All the same, the book is well worth reading by those who like odd scraps of knowledge and penetrating incidental judgements. It is also pleasant to handle and generously illustrated. The Nadar photograph of Verne at twenty-five alone fills several gaps in the written portrait. It underlines a robust wit which Mr. Allott, in his conscientious search for the *Zeitgeist*, overlooks beyond a few amusing quotations from letters. It is a face which expects success, and knows where to look for it, the face of a professional. He would have enjoyed, no doubt, the elaborate structure which has been built round him, just as Priestley might enjoy the invocation of Arkwright, a treatise on social distress due to the boll-weevil, and an historical survey of free education in Bradford, as glosses on the inception of *The Good Companions*; but he would certainly have been surprised.

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

The Trumpet and Other Poems, by Edward Thomas. Faber & Faber. London. Pp. 80. 2s. 6d.

I have been garrisoned for six months in Edward Thomas's country and walked his walks. I have sheltered from the rain in the beautiful house he built but did not inhabit. I have read his poems often and often in tent and hut. And now there is this little book to review. Of the book I can say it is well chosen and good

HORIZON'S MAGAZINE SERVICE

Subscriptions and Back Numbers of many American and Canadian magazines can be obtained through *Horizon*. Each month we shall announce and summarize contents of new arrivals.*

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*So far we have seen no magazines from South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, and only one from India. Will the editors concerned please note!

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to have or give—though Zodiac Books could do it as well for a shilling. But of Edward Thomas it is difficult to speak. Say that he was a wise and good man, even after one has realized the cause of his dark and divided personality—

‘I but respond to you
And do not love.’—

his own words. Say his poetry has the quality of bread, or tweed, or a ploughed field; strength, simplicity and a natural delicacy that together can express the most complex and mysterious moods—what he called ‘melancholy’—and at the same time convey a tremendous reality, both of place and time and mind. Consider this:

‘ . . . When I turn away, on its fine stalk
Twilight has fined to naught, the parsley flower
Figures, suspended still and ghostly white. . . . ’

And as a war poet, say that he did not suffer as Sassoon, Owen, Rosenberg, and was not embittered beyond bearing, but felt it as a profound and serious experience, a voice in him—Death, the ultimate response that he, despite himself, desired. The War came to him as to his dead ploughman, naturally. He accepted his own death and, it seems, the death of every fated soldier. Why? Possibly because he could not write the poetry of supreme anger; possibly because he was a soldier; possibly because he loved England too well.

Yet when all this is said, his poetry remains.

ALUN LEWIS

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